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PAROCHIAL

AND

CATHEDRAL SERMONS

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PAROCHIAL

AND

CATHEDRAL SERMONS.

BY THE

REV. E. B. PUSEY, D.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW, AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

TEACH ME, O LORD, THE WAY OF THY STATUTES; AND I SHALL KEEP IT UNTO THE END. *Psalm* cxix. 33.

Third Thousand.

LONDON:

WALTER SMITH (LATE MOZLEY),

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE SERMONS, which the love of some friends wished me to collect, were preached at very different periods, and to very different congregations; some in the Parish Church of my native village; some to a congregation chiefly intellectual, but in the early development of their intellects. Of all it is little to say that, if there is any good, it is not my own. Even Pascal, with his original genius, said, "We, authors, may well use the word, 'we;' for the best of what we have is not our own." Much more in the sacred office of Preacher, we could hardly think of drawing only from our own well. In the graphic description of his own teacher S. Ambrose, S. Augustine[a] pictures to us, how intently he studied the volumes of those before him, so as, in those intervals of rest, to be entirely unconscious of the presence of those who went in and out of the place where he was studying. S. Ambrose in part translated, in part adapted language of S. Basil[b]. We know from a notary of S. Cyprian, that he never passed one day without reading him[c] whom he familiarly called, 'the master,' Tertullian. S. Gregory the Great, in his Com-

[a] Conf. vi. 3. p. 88. Oxf. Tr.

[b] See Bened. Pref. to the de Tobia of S. Ambrose T. i. p. 589, 590.

[c] S. Jerome de Virr. Ill. c. 53. on the authority of Paulus of Concordia, whom he himself had seen, and who had seen the notary of S. Cyprian.

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mentary on Job, the Magna Moralia[d], shews himself not unfrequently a diligent student and follower of S. Augustine. Bede (about A. D. 701-735) so used S. Augustine, that it has been thought that, where pieces of S. Augustine's Commentary have been lost, Bede would represent them.

In later times, both Bourdaloue and Massillon were great readers of the Fathers. There is a saying of an Italian Canonico, 'No wonder that A. is a poor Preacher; for he is no reader of the Fathers.' In the great French Manual for Preachers (the Bibliothèque des Prédicateurs) there is on every subject, besides a selection of passages of Holy Scripture specially bearing upon it, one of French devout writers, another of sayings of the Fathers and ancient writers. It happened to the writer to see the copy of S. Chrysostom (Library of the Fathers) which had belonged to a popular extempore preacher of his day. Passages which he digested and made his own were marked throughout the volume, and indexed.

A little slovenliness and want of definiteness has been observed of late in the writings of some who are in the main teaching the truth. They probably would see it themselves, if they should become accustomed to the clear definite exact language of S. Augustine. Nor would it cost much labour. If any would spend as much time in reading the Fathers as they do on daily or weekly papers, magazines, periodicals, and other ephemeral publications, they could in a few years enrich their life's blood by the marrow and fulness of the teaching of the Fathers. And

[d] Translated, Library of the Fathers.

it is to be remembered that a main part of the writings of very chief Fathers, as S. Chrysostom, S. Augustine, S. Ambrose[e] (whom S. Augustine reverenced as a Father), S. Cyril of Alexandria, has been commentaries on Holy Scripture.

We do need in these days, when there are pitfalls on every side, very exact teaching; and more exact teaching we could scarcely find than his, who taught in his Sermons the poor of Hippo, and while he was teaching, watched whether they understood him, and adapted himself to those among them who were rather slower to catch his meaning. It has surprised a very intellectual layman, to know that that condensed teaching of S. Augustine was delivered extempore.

If I might leave one bequest to the rising generation of Clergy, who will have (what I have had only incidentally) the office of Preachers, it would be, 'In addition to the study of Holy Scripture, which they too studied night and day, study the Fathers, especially S. Augustine.'

Christ Church,
Easter, 1882.

[e] The Commentaries of S. Ambrose on Isaiah and S. Paul, (which are lost) probably exceeded in size those on S. Luke and certain Psalms, which remain. So gladly did he dwell on the Psalms, that his Benedictine Editors observe that he takes occasion to introduce comments upon the 14, 41, 42, and 51st Psalms while treating on 'usury,' [de Tobia from S. Basil] 'the plaint of David' [de interpellatione David Lib. ii. c. 3 sqq.] and his first 'plea for David' [Apol. David. i. 8 sqq.]

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SERMON I.

FALSE PEACE.

1 Cor. iv. 4.

"*I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.*"

It is then possible, that a man's conscience may be wholly at rest, may not have anything for which it reproaches itself, may think that all is well with it; and yet all may be very ill. And if things are ill with it, the illness is most extreme, most hopeless, most irremediable. If a soul is displeasing God, while all the while it thinks that it is pleasing to God, how should it seek any remedy? or how should it find or have, what it seeks not?

S. Paul had declined all judgements of men. *One* only can judge the heart, He Who made it, Who holds it in His hand, Who knows it. Man can judge from the surface only. Man judges man from outward appearance only, from some outward acts. He sees not within. In the very plainest cases, he may be mistaken. Who would not have preferred the Pharisees, with their outward holiness and strictness, their zeal for the law, their long prayers, their

alms to the poor, their punctual payment of their dues, before the publicans and harlots? The whole Jewish people did so. Yet what saith the Lord? "[a]The publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before you." Outwardly they were worse: but their conscience was not blinded. They were nearer to repentance, and more open to it. They repented, and returned to their Father, and He received them as sons, and made them sons, and the Angels rejoiced over the lost and found.

Human praise and human blame are mostly valueless, because men know not the whole which they praise or blame. "[b]Who knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" But neither must man trust wholly his judgements of himself. "I know nothing by" or "of myself." "[c]Herein," S. Paul says to the Governor, "do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards men." Yet he remembered, how it is written, "[d]Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults;" and "[e]every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord trieth the heart." He Who trieth the heart shall judge the heart. And then how many things, which seemed righteous now, shall be seen to have been sin! How much, which lay concealed from the conscience, shall then be laid open! How much, which from evil custom, or from compliance with the ways of others, or from want of thought, the soul never looked upon as sin!

But since even an Apostle said, that although he

[a] S. Matt. xxi. 31. [b] 1 Cor. ii. 11.
[c] Acts xxiv. 16. [d] Ps. xix. 12. [e] Prov. xxi. 2.

"knew nothing of himself," he was not thereby justified, what a vast abyss then must the unsifted, unexamined conscience of a sinner be! If an Apostle, whose earnest care it was to keep his conscience void of offence towards God and man, was not sure that he wholly knew himself, how surely must one be ignorant of his sin, who does not look narrowly into himself! If *he* is surely ignorant, how much more deeply ignorant, one who looks not at all! And what then is the depth of *his* ignorance, who wishes not to see himself, who shuts his eyes on himself, who "[f]flattereth himself in his own sight," so as not to see his sin and to hate it!

There are two sorts of peaceful consciences, and there are two sorts of troubled consciences. There is a good conscience which is peaceful, because it mourns its past sin for love of Him Who loved us; it resists mightily present temptation, in His might Who overcame the Evil one; it trusts in Him, Who never fails those who trust Him. This is a foretaste of Paradise, peace in Him Who is our Peace; "[g]peace which passeth all understanding." But even the good conscience may be troubled, either if it roots not out strongly lesser faults, or if it dwells on the hardness of the struggle rather than on the greatness of the Reward; if it serves in fear, rather than in love; if it dwells on its failings rather than on the boundless love of Jesus, or thinks of Him as the Judge more than the Redeemer.

But peace, as it is the blessing of the good conscience, so it is the curse of the bad conscience. A conscience at peace is the highest life, or the deepest

[f] Ps. xxxvi. 2. [g] Phil. iv. 7.

death. A troubled, remorseful conscience has life. Its remorse is the token of its life. There is hope of a man amid any sin; I might almost say, amid any mass of sins, if he hates them, and does not hate them less than he once did. Nay, there is hope of him, if he has any real hatred still. No frequency or rapidity of falls, no habit of sin, not even relapses into sin again and again, after a breathing-time from sin, leave a case hopeless, so that a man does not justify his sin; so that when the sin is past, he hates it and himself for doing it. In this too he may deceive himself. But any remorse of his soul for his sin, although it end in his seeking his sin again, is still God's Voice within him, pleading with him against his sin. God's long-suffering is not worn out yet. *He* only knows, whether His despised grace must be suspended for a time, lest it be refused and leave the soul worse off than before. But as yet He has not withdrawn it. He yet speaks to the soul. Though the soul be dead to love, it is not dead to fear; although it has no heart for the love of God, it yet dreads His anger. The soul may "[h] hear the voice of the Son of God" still; and if it indeed hears, it will turn to Him and "live."

A conscience wholly at peace and yet sinning, is not alive, but dead. The light which was in the soul is darkness. The eye of the soul is blind; the ear has been stopped, until it can no longer hear; the heart has been drugged and stupified, until it can no longer feel. These are they of whom God says, "[i] their consciences are seared with a hot iron." The slightest touch of the hot iron is intensest pain.

[h] S. John v. 25. [i] 1 Tim. iv. 2.

If it remain long, it destroys all sense of feeling. The scorched part is dead; it can feel no more. Sharper than the piercing of a sword is the anguish of the soul on its first deep sin. If the soul feels the pain no more, it is that it is dead, unless God awake anew the soul again dead in trespasses and sins.

How then may we know, my brethren, if, as we think, we have peace, whether our peace is the false or the true? The false is far more common than the true. The false peace needs but that a man should follow his passions; that he should do what he, that is, his corrupt nature, desires, and stifle his conscience. True peace requires, that a man should have resisted and subdued his desires, and have obeyed his conscience.

Both believe themselves to be right. Neither can be disturbed. True peace rests on the knowledge of God and the love of God. It comes from God, it dwells in God. False peace relies on ignorance of God and of itself. It is a "[j] spirit of deep sleep," the Prophet says. How can it be awakened?

It is something to see that there is such a thing as false peace. It is something to know that all is not, of necessity, well with a man, because he is at peace with himself. For this is his very delusion. 'I have nothing against myself; my conscience does not reproach me. It *must* then be well with me.' But if there have been those, whose conscience did not reproach them, and yet they were openly in sin, then it is no safety, that *thy* conscience does not reproach *thee*.

How was David at rest, for a whole year after

[j] Is. xxix. 10.

those two heaviest sins of which human nature is capable, adultery and murder! His conscience was alive as to the injustice of taking away a poor man's ewe-lamb; it was dead to his own. The very parable of the prophet did not awaken him. 'Some,' he had thought, 'must die in the battle; *he* did not kill Uriah; he fell by the sword of the children of Ammon[k]; and now his wife was a widow, and might be *his* wife.' Horrible deceitfulness of sin, which could commit murder, in order to hide the shame of one injured, and then make the murder the pathway to marriage! Yet now too, "[l] delicate women" will consent to murder in order to hide sin.

How did Balaam blind his conscience, putting himself continually close to temptation, and professing that he would not yield to it! "[m] The word that God putteth into my mouth, that will I speak." "[n] His heart went after his covetousness;" his speech was fair. Doubtless, he blinded himself, (as so many do now), because he used good words. He did speak God's words in his office as a prophet, while God still employed him. As a man, he straightway gave the devilish counsel[o] to seduce Israel to idolatry by the beauty of the daughters of Midian, and fell in the battle[p] with the people whom, in the name of God, he had blessed.

How did Simeon and Levi blind their conscience by their passion in their treacherous vengeance! Yet they themselves had no doubt that they were justified. They retorted on their father, "[q] Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?"

[k] 2 Sam. xi. 23—25; xii. 9. [l] Deut. xxviii. 56.
[m] Num. xxii. 38. [n] Ezek. xxxiii. 31. [o] Num. xxxi. 16.
[p] ib. 8. [q] Gen. xxxiv. 31.

Esau was deceived, when he sold his birthright for the mess of pottage. He did not think *himself* "profane" (as Scripture calls him), but Jacob a deceiver. He knew what he did; but he justified himself by looking away from himself, and calling Jacob a supplanter[r].

Saul justified himself against God's prophet for retaining, against God's command, what he valued, by destroying what was "vile and refuse," and purposing to sacrifice to God a portion of what, in disobedience to Him, he retained. In his first act of disobedience, when he sacrificed without waiting for Saul, he "constrained himself;" he did violence to himself, to offer sacrifice to God. In the second he justified himself. When he consulted the woman with the familiar spirit against God's law, it was still on the plea of necessity, that God answered him no more. When he murdered himself, religion was still in his mouth, "[s] lest the uncircumcised should abuse me."

Samson deceived himself by tampering as to the secret of his strength which God gave him, making as though he had betrayed it, when he did not, until at the end, when he *did* betray it, "[t] he wist not that the Lord was departed from him."

Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard, and held himself justified, while he enquired not how *Jezebel* would give it to him. But God said to him, "[u] Hast *thou* killed?" He counted the prophets of God, Elijah and Micaiah, his enemies, because they spake to

[r] Gen. xxvii. 36; Heb. xii. 16.
[s] 1 Sam. xv. 9, 15; xiii. 12; xxviii. 15; xxxi. 4. [t] Jud. xvi. 20.
[u] 1 Kings. xxi. 19, 20; xxii. 8.

him the truth from God, and would have awakened his conscience and hindered his destruction.

The Jews of old counted Jeremiah a traitor, because he weakened [x] they said, the hands of the men of war, telling them plainly what surely came to pass, and bidding the people to submit to the king of Babylon, whom they had sworn to obey. They justified themselves for their worship of the Queen of heaven, their idol; *then*, when they worshipped her they said, it was well with them; when they ceased to worship her, all went ill [x].

And how was it, when our Lord came? How did they, step by step, deepen their blindness! They enquired into His authority; they sought to ensnare Him, to find some fault in the All-holy One; they opposed the law of Moses, His servant, through whom He gave the law, the law of the Sabbath of which He was the Lord, to Himself. They "[y] slew Him, the Holy One and the Just, and required a murderer to be granted unto them." As with the Master, so with the servant. They called the Master of the House Beelzebub, how much more those of the household! "[z] Whosoever killeth you," our Lord forewarned the Apostles, "shall think that he doeth God service."

But since there has been such a large reign of self-deceit, how may any of us know, that we are not deceived now? Men have thought they did God service while they murdered God's servants. It is not enough then to think that we do God service.

A conscience, healthfully at peace, has been kept

[x] Jer. xxxviii. 4, comp. xliv. 15—18; Ezek. xvii. 13—19.
[y] Acts iii. 14. [z] S. John xvi. 2.

in peace, through believing in God, loving God, serving God, and, by the grace of God, conquering self for the love of God. A conscience, falsely at peace, arrived at its peace, through ignorance of God and of itself, amid the dislike to look into God's Word or to compare its own ways with it, persuading itself that what it likes is not contrary to the law of God, checking and stifling thoughts or suggestions or doubts, that it *may* not be according to the law of God.

It may have been a long time ago with some, my brethren. But look back to childhood, to the freshness of youth, before by experience you "knew good and evil," before you knew in yourselves much of evil, and think, not now only in the house of God, but think in yourselves, 'Is there any one thing, in which I now allow myself, which I once doubted to be wrong?' You may, if you will, know what your habits are *now*. Think *when* they began, and *how* they began. You will not own them now to be sins; else you would feel it a duty to repent of them. But then you ought not to shrink from looking at them in the face. If you shrink, you bear witness to yourself, that there is something which you cannot bear to look at. "[a] Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." If you dread to see yourself, if there is any corner of your heart which you dare not look steadily at, *there*, as you value your salvation, you should look; for *there* is sin. Look then, but pray, before you look, for God's light to shew you; pray for an honest and true heart, which may

[a] S. John iii. 20.

dare to bring its deeds to the light; pray for a steadfast heart, which may, for the sake of God, part with all which could sever you from God.

Or, again, is there any thing which you do, which you would be ashamed that your fellow-men should know? Is there any thing, which you would hide from every eye, and would not have it proclaimed before men, or told in this church? In the Judgement Day, the very thing which you hide, that which you do in the secret chamber or in the thicket, hidden from man's sight, shall be proclaimed to your shame before men and angels. That is a false peace, which would be broken, if man knew the whole heart and the whole life. Any moment might break it; if not broken before, it will be broken more terribly in the Day of Judgement.

Again a false peace is founded on false maxims. Such are these; 'Why should I not do what others do?' 'Why should I be singular?' 'It is proud and presumptuous not to do as others do!' "[b] Follow not a multitude to do evil," saith Almighty God. Or, 'I cannot live,' the poor man is tempted to say, 'without this or that.' "[c] Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," says our Divine Lord. Or 'It is no such great thing; it is not so bad as it seems. It is but this one thing.' Yea, "[d] whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," saith God Himself. The law of God is one and inseparable, as is Almighty God Himself. Each part of it expresses the mind of God and the will of God. Whenever you wilfully break it,

[b] Ex. xxiii. 2. [c] S. Matth. vi. 33. [d] S. James ii. 10.

you prefer the passion, the want, the craving, and thyself in each and all, to Almighty God.

Again, a false peace is gained by looking at this or that fault of another. 'This thing cannot be so bad, because such an one does it.' 'This one does this thing; that other, that. They must know well what they are doing. They cannot mean to damn themselves.' "[e] To his own Master" each man "standeth or falleth." Thou knowest not his secret heart. Thou knowest not, whether he is not, by the grace of God, struggling against the very sin, which outwardly thou seest, and which thou wouldest copy. Or what do these men, but gather to themselves the different diseases which destroy the soul, and think that, because each does not destroy life, he may invite them all into his soul, and yet not die?

These may be tests to you, my brethren. Has thy peace come to thee, while looking into thyself, or looking away from thyself? by taking up with corrupt maxims of the world, or while looking into the law of God? while listening to conscience, or while escaping from it? while encouraging thyself by the sins of those around thee, or while looking to Jesus to forgive thee the past, to keep thee by His Spirit and give thee power over thy sins?

Look well then whether, at the beginning, thy conscience followed thy desires, or thy desires thy conscience. Granted that there is nothing about which you reproach yourself, that your desires and your conscience are at one! How was the peace made? which gave way? People begin mostly in little things. They take some little thing which is

[e] Rom. xiv. 4.

not theirs, or which seems of no great value to its owner, or which, it is thought, he will not miss. Conscience remonstrates; "Thou shalt not steal." God's word is rehearsed Sunday after Sunday, "Thou shalt not steal;" and conscience says sharply, 'It *was* stealing.' And then the will cozens the conscience, and says, it is but 'this and that.' Conscience is silenced. The deed is done again. Conscience again forbids; 'you may not.' Then it is put off. 'Only this once; I cannot help it now. I have begun. I cannot draw back.' Conscience is thrust back again, wounded, murmuring, if it is not allowed to speak out. When next conscience forbids, it is put off to a more convenient time, or the passion turns away from it, or tells it to its face, 'I *will* do it.' And then, to avoid conscience, the soul busies itself and buries itself amid any tumult of pleasure, or thought, or care, until, in the crowd, as it hopes, it will never see the face of conscience, never behold itself. In this way does the soul inure itself to break every commandment of God. The 'It is but this,' '*This* surely, is no sin,' 'I will not go further,' 'Only this once,' is the sure way to go further and do it oftener. In this way the conscience is first dulled; then drugged to sleep; then stupified; then seared and past feeling. Look at the first step and the last! Who in the first act of vanity could picture the hardened, unabashed woman, of whom the Proverbs speak? Who in the first act of self-indulgence, could picture the bloated drunkard? Who could picture the remorseless hardened sinner in the first forced stifling of remorse?

But conscience, brethren, has an inextinguishable

life. It may be drugged, corrupted, stupified, stunned, buried. It cannot be destroyed. It will awake again once; here, or in eternity. Pitiable it is, when it wakes on the death-bed, and says to the dying sinner, 'behold thyself.' Miserable would it then be, when thy life is all but gone, when the last hour for repentance is fast waning, when thou knowest not wherewith to begin, or how to repent, or what to repent of, or how, while there is yet time, to flee to Him Who died that thou mightest not offend Him; Who pleaded with thee through thy conscience, through the suggestions of His Spirit, or through His Voice within thee or without thee;—miserable would it be *then* to have thy whole life for the first time arrayed before thee, all thy sins marshalled around thee, all claiming thee as thy companions, the friends of thy life, the children of thy soul, all prepared to attend thee and escort thee to the judgement-seat of Almighty God! Miserable would it be, if conscience were to wake then! How wouldest thou bear its voice, when it said to thee, 'God gave me to thee as His Voice to thee; He gave me to thee, as thy guide through all the perils of life. I warned thee; I forbad thee in the Name of God; I remonstrated with thee; I used all means towards thee; I told thee what sweet rest thou wouldest have, if thou wouldest obey me; I called thee loudly; I found thee, though thou countedst me thine enemy; I wearied not, though thou didst hate me, and escape from me, and elude me, and toldest me falsehoods; I tried, when I could gain access to thee, remorse, and anguish, and shame, and bitterness, and disquiet. I met thee before thy sins, and

in thy sins, and after thy sins; and I told thee the bitter end of sin, the sweet peace of serving God. And thou wouldest not. And what canst thou do now?'

Miserable and pitiable as this would be, it would be a great mercy of God. As men live, so they seem to die. Death finishes up, what was begun before. If the soul is awakened even on the death-bed, it may yet be saved by the grace of God. It may yet seek Jesus, and be forgiven. Too often, if it has slept till then, it seems then to sleep the sleep of death.

But miserable and pitiable as this awakening of conscience would be then, at the last, there is what is more miserable still, that it should *not* awaken. What would it be, my brethren, if your conscience were to awake first at the judgement-seat of Christ? Miserable would be the loss, if thou couldest drug thy conscience for ever! But what, since thou canst not? stifle it, stupify it, deaden it, corrupt it, as much as thou canst *here*, *there*, in that pure holy light of the Presence of God will it be alive, clear, transparent, unextinguishable. Then it will unfold before thee every thought, word, and deed, whereby, since it first spake to thee, thou didst ever offend God. All will be laid up in order then, sins which thou knewest, and sins which thou didst hide from thyself; sins, which thou didst turn away from, while thou didst them, that thou mightest not see them; sins about which thou didst lie to thyself, and tell thyself that they were not sins, until at last thou didst half or wholly believe thyself; sins which thou didst excuse to thyself; sins which thou didst commit blindly and stupidly, because thou hadst stupified and blinded thyself by other sins.

Since then thou must see thy sins once, now, or *then* when, if unrepented of, they would drag thee down to hell, bear to behold them now, while, by God's grace they may be repented of, forsaken, and, for Jesus' sake, forgiven. Jesus died that those very sins might be forgiven thee. He saw thee on the Cross, which for thee He bare; He loved thee, that thou mightest love Him; He willeth that thou shouldest love Him for ever, and live in His everlasting love. Shrink not then from seeing now, in the presence of His love, the sins which, if thou repentest not of them now, thou must behold then in the face of His wrath. It is a piercing thing to behold sin. If thou couldest escape from ever seeing it, if thou couldest hide it for ever from thee, it would be nothing strange, although miserable, that thou shouldest shut thine eyes from a thing so hateful! But, since thou canst not escape beholding it once, then wrap it up no more, hide it not, cloak it not, to prey upon thy conscience, thy heart, thy soul; to gnaw on, an undying worm, for ever; but lay it open before thy Father, if thou wilt, in secret; unfold it before Him; He will not reproach thee, nor shame thee, nor cast thee aside, nor look coldly or severely on thee. When thou surveyest thy sin, and sayest to Him, "I am no more worthy to be called Thy son," He will again own thee; He will receive thee in His love; angels will rejoice over thee, and the Lord of the angels, thy Redeemer, Who now intercedes for thee, will rejoice over thee, that "the dead is alive, and the lost is found."

SERMON II.

CONVERSION.

S. Matt. xviii. 3.

"*Except ye be converted, and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"

Man was made for God. Of us alone God said, "[a]Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." He made us to behold Him; beholding, to reflect Him; reflecting Him, to be glorified in Him. He made us to be the objects of His love, that He might love us, and we might love Him. This is the one end of our being. He willed to give us all the bliss, which creatures could contain. He, the Infinite God, made us, that we might be united with Him. Part of Him we could not be, since God is one and cannot be parted. Yet on that very ground He would be more wholly ours. He, the Infinite, All-perfect, All-good God, willed to impart Himself to us wholly. He willed, by dwelling in us, to make us wise by His light, loving through His love, holy through His Spirit. He willed, evermore to shine on into our souls, to be the light of our souls, that we might see all things truly by His Light. He willed, unceasingly to pour His love into us, that we might

[a] Gen. xii. 26.

love Himself and all besides, as He loveth each and all. He willed to make us holy, that we might be little pictures of Himself, and that He might dwell with good-pleasure upon us, as a father's soul rests with joy and love upon the child of his love.

From this we fell by sin; to this God willed to restore us in Christ. Sin was to choose, against God's will, something instead of God. Sin darkened the light of God in our souls; it chilled our love; it emptied us of His Spirit. In Baptism, God gave us of His Spirit, renewed us in His image, gave us new grace, that we might be able to love Him, to see His truth and to love it, to will all which He wills, not to will, what He wills not; to dwell with joy on the thought of Him, to converse with Him, speak to Him, come to Him, turn to Him with reverent love, as a child turns with reverential love to a revered father who loves it, and pours its joys, its griefs, its troubles, its fears, into its father's loving heart.

For this He made us, and re-made us, my brethren! But how has it been with us since? how is it now? We were made His children *once*. Each one of us, (as we confess in our Catechism,) was made a "member of Christ," and in Him, "a child of God" and through Him, an "heir of the kingdom of Heaven." Have we remained His children? or if we ever ceased to be such, and were alienated from Him by heavy grievous sins, forgetting Him, going away in heart and act and life from Him, loving His creatures more than Him, have we, in truth of heart and act and life, returned to Him, sorrowing for love of Him, that we ever forsook Him, *His* laws, *His* will, and chose our own?

I do not mean, that such a change (if it was needed) must have taken place suddenly, at some fixed moment, so that all who have turned to God at all, must be able to say, 'at such a time I turned to God.' Nor do I mean, that such turning to God must have been once for all; so that, if any one unhappily in any degree fell back into the sins which he had forsaken, the former turning to God was not sincere. God draws people by different ways; and they follow Him with different degrees of faithfulness. Some He draws on, little by little, and they *ever* follow Him, laying aside by His grace the faults of childhood, deepening continually each implanted grace, and leavening with His grace each natural virtue which, apart from His grace, would degenerate into sin. These by God's grace turn steadily to Him, from the time they first hear of Him and take Him to be their Father, their Saviour, and their God. Some who neglect the former calls of His grace, still, on the whole, with laggard steps, follow Him, and never turn wholly away from Him. Some, in childhood, fall even into deadly sin, as a lie, which others have never known, and yet, even after repeated falls, have through God's restraining grace so recovered by true sorrow, as never to be wholly separated from God. In that dangerous season of life, when childhood is passing into youth, and ripening age brings with it a consciousness of implanted strength of body or mind, or powers of thought, or personal appearance, before unknown, vanity, or pride, or ambition, or worldliness, or self-conceit, will often dispute with God, the possession of the young heart; and yet, imperilled though it be, and half-inclined to unite

the service of God and of His enemy, the grace of God had finally the victory, and was never lost. Others, under strong temptation, go even to the verge of very deadly sin; and yet are, by God's mighty grace, withheld. Others lessen the devotions which they have been taught in childhood, or say them hurriedly, or seem held loosely by the grace of God, and are like leaves untimely dried on the tree and ready to fall from the vine and perish; and yet, frail though the tenure be, God suffers them not to be shaken, but supplies fresh sap of His grace, and they again are green with His renewed life in them and shine brightly with His light. Some allow but a little dust to gather on the white garments of their Baptism; and, aroused and quickened by Him, shake it off quickly and gird themselves steadfastly to follow Him.

At every stage of life, alas! some drop off. Some "go back and cease to follow Christ" at every trial; and, if they return, they must return in penitence and shame for having left so good and loving a Master. And they who return, return with different degrees of zeal and penitence and love. Some have turned further away, and had a longer way to return. Some turn more slowly; some more resolutely; some more earnestly. Some at once forsake all which holds them back, and follow Him. Some lay it aside little by little; some after relapses. Sad it is to have relapsed, after having feared God and begun to love Him. Yet, so great a good is it for us to love God, that for love of us, He would any how win us to His love.

Yet, in whatever way the change may be wrought,

a change there must be. God is the Lord, the Father, the Centre of the soul. The soul must turn wholly to Him for its life, its light, its peace, its joy, its resting-place, all good to it, all goodness in it. As the flower follows the sun, and opens itself to its glow, and through that glow sends forth its fragrance, and ripens its fruit, so the soul must turn to Him, the Sun of Righteousness, unfold itself wholly to His life-giving glow, hide nothing from His searching beams, and through the fire of His love ripen to Him the fruits of His Spirit. We may not have turned to God in the same way. But whoever has turned from God, and is now turned to Him, must know if he once neglected God and now he seeks Him; if once he served sin, and now he hates it; if once he chose his own will, and now he chooses God's will; if once he loved the world and the things of the world, and now he loves the thought of God, and the love of God, and the hope to behold God Who has loved him. God and sin are opposites. Whoever has prized what God condemns, must now despise what once he prized; he must prize what once he despised. Whoso has loved what God hates, must come to be of one mind with God, by loving what once he hated, and hating what once he loved. Whoso has done what God forbade, must do what once he shrank from, and shrink from what he once did.

This is a marked change which the soul cannot but know. The soul may not have heeded itself; it may not have watched itself; it may not have observed by what paths, or through what secret warnings, what loathing of sin, what longing after

what is holier, purer, it emerged out of the depth of its prison-house into the light of life in God. But life and death, light and darkness, sunshine and blackness of tempest, glowing warmth and numbing cold, are not so distinct as sin and holiness. You cannot, without knowing it, pass from lowering darkness to the joyous light, from a dungeon to free open day. Be the pathway never so long, let the dawning of light have been never so gradual, you would remember that you were once in darkness, and feel that you are now in light. So too, by whatever way God has led you, you must, if that change has indeed been wrought in you, know, that whereas "[a] ye were sometimes darkness, now are ye light in the Lord."

This is the change of which our Lord speaks, a change different in degrees, in strength of faith, in power of love. Yet still a change, wrought, not by man's will or strength, but by a power above man's nature, the re-creating grace of God. As soon might you think that a man was restored from deep sickness to health, from pain to ease, from weakness to strength, and yet know it not, as suppose that a person was indeed changed from sin to holiness, from powerlessness under the might of sin to might and power over it, and know not that, whereas once he was sin's slave, now he was free.

But is it then that no change was needed? To whom did our Lord say those words, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven?" To those who had "left all and followed Him;" to those

[a] Eph. v. 8.

who had "continued with Him in His temptations;" who clave to Him, when others fell away; who heard His words and laid them up in their hearts; whom He called "friends," "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world." They too needed a change, and such a change, that without it they could not even enter the kingdom of heaven. And were they not changed? They who, in terror, forsook Him and fled, jeoparded their lives to the death, and counted it all joy to suffer and to die for Christ and with Christ. They who at every warning of their Lord's approaching sufferings, longed to be the first in His kingdom, joyed in being the "[b] off-scouring of all things," for their Master's sake; they who wished to call down fire from heaven to avenge their Master or smote with the sword, prayed for their persecutors, would almost be cut off from the joys and glory of heaven, if so more souls might be won to Christ; they breathed with no fire but the pure glowing fire of love.

But if Apostles, before the Holy Ghost came upon them and filled them in the Day of Pentecost, had need to be changed, how much more surely had we! Have you known any change in yourselves, my brethren? I say not, whether it has been at once, or slower, or faster, or chequered, or unsteady, or weak or strong. I ask not as to any of the circumstances of the change. But look inward; look into your inmost hearts, and answer to yourselves and to God; Do I love God more than I once did, or less? Do I think more gladly of Him, or less? Do I obey His laws in a way in which once I did not? Do I see

[b] 1 Cor. iv. 13.

that to be sin, which once I held to be harmless? Have I more fear of the very borders of sin? If sin or negligence, anger or sloth, selfishness or ambition, or pride, or covetousness, or vanity, once mastered me, have I power over them now?

Would God, my brethren, that there were more, who knew not what grievous sin was! Would God, there were more, whose whole change was to gird themselves more resolutely, keep themselves to God more stedfastly, serve Him more devotedly! But has it been so? Has this indeed been all we have had to learn? And if He were to come among us visibly now, as He is among us invisibly, could each of you say to Him, "[c]Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee?" If we cannot, what shall we say to Him in that Day, when love alone shall abide?

But what, my brethren, if there have been deeper sin? Conversion to God is not a mere ceasing from some sin, when the temptation ceases. It is not a breaking off from outward sin, while the heart enjoys the memory of it, and enacts it again in thought. Conversion is not the disuse of coarser or deeper sins, amid the wilful indulgence of lesser or more refined sin. Much less is it the exchange of the sin of one time of life for that which besets a later age, or a zeal which compounds for the sins it likes, by condemning in another those it has no mind to. It is not, to disuse or abstain from sin, because outward circumstances are changed, or health forbids indulgence in such sin. Conversion is not a passing emotion of the soul, nor is it a mere passionate sorrow, or

[c] S. John xxi. 17.

remorse. Without ceasing from sin, there is no conversion. Yet to cease from sin is not alone conversion; nor is it for the soul only to condemn its own sin. It is, to hate, for the love of God, whatever in the soul displeases God; it is, to hate its former self for having displeased God; it is, to love God, Who has borne with it in its sins; it is, to love Jesus Who died for it, although He knew how it would forsake, offend, reject Him. Conversion is a change of mind, a change of the heart, a change of the life. The mind, enlightened by the grace of God, sees what once it saw not; the heart, touched by the grace of God and melted by the love of God in Christ Jesus, loves what once it loved not; and the life is changed, because the mind and heart, being changed, cannot endure the slavery to the sins which, before, they chose; and now they love, for the love of Jesus, to submit and subdue themselves to the love of God, which before they did not endure.

It is a piercing thing for the soul to feel that it has indeed offended God, wasted His love and His grace, wasted itself. It is a terrible thing to own to itself that it deserved hell. It is a hard thing, to own that this or that, to which a person has been inured, which has become a second nature to it, has been wrong. It is too hard for human nature to break off one evil custom. Wretched is the slavery, to which a man subjects himself, through growth in sin. Freely he subjects himself to it. When he has subjected himself to the sin, he is sold under it; and he cannot again be freed, except through the powerful grace of God, which, when selling himself to sin, he despised.

Therefore few of those, who forsake God, really turn to God. Few will look steadily at their past lives. If they do look back, they look with the desire not to see what they shrink from seeing, lest they should have to own what they shrink from owning, and to hate what they have done. Few will look honestly at their present lives, lest they should have to give up what they are loath to part with, to refuse themselves what they suspect to be sin. Old habits plead hard with the soul. 'Is it indeed *necessary* to give us up? Can you endure to give us up *altogether?* for ever? Does God then indeed require it? Granted, that this or that might be lessened, can God will what is so hard for me, what is impossible? God does not command what is impossible. It cannot be.'

God does not command what is impossible. But He does command what, with man, is impossible. Yet with and through God all things are possible.

But so, few are converted! Few who have turned away from God, turn back to Him. Few make more than some little outward change, while their hearts are unchanged. Few give themselves, with a full, entire heart to God, surrendering to Him their whole selves, their hopes, their wishes, their fears, their anxieties, their loves, their dislikes, their wills, their thoughts, words, and deeds; so as without reserve to become wholly His. Few say, with S. Paul, "[d]Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" willing, without any holding back, to know it, and with stedfast purpose, by His Almighty grace, when they know it, to do it. But then, since this is so, few of those who

[d] Acts ix. 6.

have left God, wholly return to Him; if they do not wholly return to Him, they do not actually return at all. "[e]Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Then they are not His; and, if not His now, how will they be His in the Day of Judgement? We know not. God may amid all their sluggishness and half-heartedness have still retained some presence of grace in their hearts, which He may develope by a long preparation for the Presence of God. But what an alternative. The Father's falling on the neck of the returning prodigal, and a *possibility*, that the Spirit of grace though to man invisible, may yet not have been withdrawn from the soul.

Heed not then what others do, or say, or think. Thou art not their judge; nor can they save thee. How *they* will stand at the Day of Judgement, belongs to their Master and to them, not to thee. Look thou to thyself. If thou hast struck into the narrow way, see that, by the grace of God, thou persevere in it. While we are in the flesh, there is ever room to draw still nearer to God, and to turn yet more to Him, until we come to that unchangeable bliss, where we shall evermore behold Him, evermore "be like Him; for we shall see Him as HE IS."

Thou canst not, then, excuse thyself, that thou needest no change. If thou thinkest thou needest none, thou needest all. If in this life, a man know of no disease of his soul, yet more to be healed; if he knows of no weakness, which needs by God's grace to be strengthened; if he know of no sin, from which more and more to be cleansed; if he know of no wound, yet more to be healed; no stain

[e] S. Matt. vi. 24.

of his soul, yet more to be blotted out; he has this most deadly disease of all, not to know or feel his own disease.

I do not accuse any of you, my brethren. I do not say of any of you, what change you need, or that you need an entire change. ONE knoweth the heart; and He, if you in earnest desire it, will shew you your own. God, Who wills you to turn to Him, is not a hard Master, that you should fear His service. He is not stern to those who turn to Him, but full of mercy. Fear not, that He will not forgive you your sins. He has nailed them to the Cross with His own Hands, which He stretches out to receive you. Fear not, that you are too much bound by the chain of your sins. "[f] The Lord looseth them that are bound." Think not, that you will have to give up that, without which you cannot live. "[g] Your Father, Which is in Heaven, knoweth what ye have need of, before ye ask Him."

O! if you could but know what joy, what peace, what rest it is, without reserve, with all the heart and mind and soul and strength, to love God! It is to pass from a wretched loathsome slavery to joyous freedom; from fear to hope; from endless unrest to unending rest in God; from unsatisfied craving to contentment in Him. Then may you indeed trust in Jesus when you desire to obey Him; and in Him you shall find peace and joy and bliss and assured rest; compared with which, all other joy is grief; all pleasure is pain; all sweetness, bitterness; all softness, hardness; all riches, poverty; all rest, weariness; all fulness, emptiness; all abundance in all

[f] Ps. cxlvi. 7. [g] S. Matt. vi. 8.

things which the soul or flesh could crave or have, emptiness; all things desirable, grievous. All things which you would have to part with, are trifling, passing as this earth; yea, more passing than this earth. For it will part with you! What you choose is Great, Eternal, Infinite. For it is your Lord and God, to be your own in perfect bliss for evermore!

SERMON III.

PERIL OF DELAYING REPENTANCE[a].

HEB. iii. 7, 8.

"*Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith) To-day if ye will hear His Voice, harden not your hearts.*"

OF all the scourges of God, wherewith He chastens man for sin, the most terrible is the scourge of war[a]. David chose a three days' pestilence, which destroyed 70,000 men, rather than three months' invasion of a conquering foe. Holy Scripture has ratified the ground of his choice. "[b] Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man." Pestilence mows down at once man in his full strength. We have seen how in the cholera, that other scourge which God is still hanging over us, the strongest man sinks down at once, powerless, helpless, unresisting, palsied by the icy touch of death. We have heard how, in famine, men walked about, almost as living corpses. Yet fiercer than a three days' pestilence, mowing down its ten thousands of mighty men from

[a] Preached at the village Church of Pusey on the day of "public humiliation." 1854.

[b] 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

one end of the land to the other; more terrible than a seven years' famine, in which "[c] the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city," and "their soul was poured out into their mothers' bosom;" "[d] the young children ask for bread, and no man breaketh it unto them;"—fiercer and more terrible than either, is the scourge of war, because, in it, man falls into the hands of man.

For thirty-nine years, God has preserved to us an almost unbroken peace. At most there has been war, only in distant continents. Nations were shaken for a while; the thrones of Europe seemed to be tottering; one fell. But God again restrained the might of lawless violence, and the earth was hushed and still. Those who have looked on to the future have long since beheld one heavy thundercloud, encircling the whole East of Europe; the power of a realm, mighty in numbers, strong through the courage of its inhabitants, rich in supplies, and its whole might wielded by one single concentrated will. To what end God willeth that it should so hang over us, events which reveal the purpose of His Providence, alone can shew. Yet none can, without awe, behold the blackness of a thunder cloud, as, in one dense heavy mass, it overspreads a quarter of the heavens. It is aweful in itself, as a token of a disordered world; and who can tell on whom it may not fall? It is aweful to stand under the mountain height on which the snow has gathered, and to know that an Unseen Hand alone holds it, that it overwhelm us not. More aweful far is it, to see the tide of war let loose. Will it be rolled back? or will it roll on? and whi-

[c] Lam. ii. 11, 12. [d] Ib. iv. 4.

ther? "[e]O Lord God, Thou knowest." But this we know; easy it is to let out a flood of water or of strife, and hard to stay it. Passion kindles passion; wrath summons up wrath; strife maddens into hatred; revenge entails revenge; the fiery circle of man's wrath spreads wider and wider, and grows fiercer, as it spreads; and who can stay it? He only Who breathed on the host of Sennacherib, and turned the waters on the armies of Pharaoh; and the mighty men of Assyria lay strewn before the walls of Jerusalem, like the withered leaves of autumn, and the hosts of Egypt "[f]sank as lead, in the mighty waters."

And therefore are we met together this day, my brethren. War as yet is far off; so far, that some of you have not even known that there is war. Peace is all around us; peacefully we wake; peacefully we toil; peacefully we sleep, if, after the duties of the day, we sleep in Him. But no one can tell how long this will last. When the whirlwind rages, who knows which tree will be uprooted? This only we know, that war is far more deadly, far more bloody, far more speedy, than heretofore. It can reach to us far more easily, come whence it may. Our island position is far less a protection, than heretofore. We dare not say, like Tyre, "[g]I sit in the seat of God in the midst of the seas;" lest to us it be said, "What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the seas?" This we know now; many are gone out from us, whose children this war will make fatherless, and their wives widows. This we know too well, that if God should ever allow the scourge of

[e] Ezek. xxxvii. 3. [f] Exod. xv. 10. [g] Ezek. xxviii. 2.

war to burst upon this our land, to be orphans and widows and childless is the very least horror of the scourge of war.

But what then have we to do? God's judgements bring to us a two-fold duty; a duty, as we are individuals and sinners; a duty, as members of the whole people. Each individual is a means of drawing down or of turning away the wrath of God. The punishment of the seven nations of Canaan was delayed, because "the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full." Had there been ten righteous in Sodom, it might have remained unto this day. The earth itself shall not be destroyed, until [h] the harvest of its iniquity is fully ripe. We have a duty then to our whole land, to "amend our ways and our doings," to put from us what God hateth, that so God may not, for our sakes also, send His judgements on our people, and destroy us with our land. God Himself complains of His people, "[i] The people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery—and I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. Therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them;—their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God." Each band of worshippers unites with each other band in one unseen bond in Christ, and through His prevailing Name hath power with God, besiegeth Heaven, overcometh God.

Yet we have each a nearer office for our own souls. The flash of lightning kindles up into the

[h] Rev. xiv. 15. [i] Ezek. xxii. 29—31.

light of day every dark corner of the forest. The lightning of God's wrath lays open to the sinner each dark corner of his own heart, and speaks to his inmost soul. "What doest thou? How wilt thou stand before God for this?" Yet not more swiftly does that lightning-flash disappear, and all again is thickest, blackest night, than, if the soul *will* not look into itself, *will* not face itself, *will* delay the thought of itself till to-morrow, the darkness of its self-deceit, which God for the moment had lighted up, closes around it more hopelessly.

Now this, my brethren, is, I fear, a special fault among some of you, that you look on to some day, when God shall, with might and without your own will, convert you; that you hope that then all will be well with you; that meantime it matters not much what you do; you may have the pleasures of sin now, the peace of forgiveness hereafter.

I do not deny that God has, powerfully and on the instant, converted sinners. He does as He wills. But the very fact that these conversions *are* signal and remembered, shows that they are not common. Men marvel rightly, and adore God, and bless Him, and thank Him, and speak of His marvellous loving-kindness and long-suffering, and of the power of His grace. They write the histories of such conversions, "[k] to show the honour of the Lord, His mighty and wonderful works, that He hath done." Such great histories live on in the memory of man from generation to generation, and men anew praise Him for His adorable mercy. But the more wonderful and outstanding such Divine works of mercy are, the

[k] Ps. lxxviii. 4.

less dare any wilful sinner hope that he will be the object of the like. Sinners are, alas! "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." How many of these were so converted and live?

We do not remark or record what takes place day by day. Were such wonders of God's grace common, no one would notice them, any more than they do the good of our daily prayers, the gradual subdual of our passions or appetites, or any other of the daily fruits of the grace of God. We notice a sudden restoration of health of body or soul, because it is out of the ordinary ways of God's providence or of His grace. We do not notice our daily nourishment through our daily food. Men take it so much as a matter of course, that they often forget that God does it. On this very ground then, that such changes are so remarked, we may be sure that they are in proportion *very* rare. And therefore it would be utter madness, in a matter of salvation, to risk your all upon a hope, to which God has not pledged Himself, and which is a rare fruit of His grace.

True! Holy Scripture is full of the mercy and long-suffering of God. "He willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live." "[l]His mercy is great unto the heavens." "The earth is full of His mercy." "He is rich in mercy." "His mercies fail not; they are new every morning." True! He appeals to us, "[m] Why *will* ye die? As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God." True! He falls on the neck of the returning prodigal, when a

[l] Ps. lvii. 10; cxix. 64. Eph. ii. 4. Lam. iii. 22, 23.
[m] Ezek. xviii. 31, 32.

great way off; He was "[n] the friend of publicans and sinners;" He prayed for those who crucified Him. He speaks of Himself as wandering after His stray sheep, laying it on His shoulders, rejoicing, and calling on the choirs of angels to rejoice with Him and share His, the Saviour's joy. True! He pictureth Himself as standing at the door[o] of the heart, and knocking, and seeking to find entrance. He calls to us within and without; He "[p] uttereth His voice in the streets," or in the secret heart; He leaves no means untried, if by any way He can win us to hear Him, and to turn to Him. But where has He promised, that He will turn us to Himself against or without our own wills? The whole dispensation of His providence has been to win our wills, to persuade us, allure us, draw us, He even vouchsafes to say, "to entice[q] us." He employs, if I may so say, all the resources of His love, to gain us to return to Him. Jesus died, that when He "[r] should be lifted up from the earth, He might *draw* all unto Him." He willed to draw us, not as unwilling, but through our wills, freely obeying Him, freely accepting His grace, freely, through His grace, commanding ourselves and our passions. He willed, not to destroy our wills, but to strengthen them, that we might, with strength of will, strongly obey Him, strongly subdue whatever in us would rebel against Him. If God willed to force men's wills, then, one might say, "Christ were dead in vain;" for He died to win us by His love to love Him Who loved us.

[n] S. Matt. xi. 19. [o] Rev. iii. 20. [p] Prov. i. 20.
[q] Hos. ii. 14. [r] S. John xii. 32.

It is true, that some persons who have been great sinners have been suddenly converted by the grace of God. S. Paul was so converted. But S. Paul had not before resisted the grace of God. He had not closed his eyes to the light, nor his ears to God's persuasive call. He says of himself, "[s] I obtained mercy, because I did it *ignorantly*, in unbelief." He "thought to do God service." He had no good desert to plead; but he had, at least, not this aggravation of his sin, that he resisted grace. Eminent, wonderful token is he of the transforming grace of God Who turned the wolf into the lamb, the blasphemer into the Apostle full of the Holy Ghost, the persecutor of Christ's name into the martyr who, for love of His Name, "[t] died daily." But his conversion gives no plea, nor covert, nor hope, for those who delay their conversion, that they may hug their sins.

Then wert thou, in thy degree, in the condition of S. Paul, whenever thou first heardest God's Voice, within or without thyself, instructing thee, or whispering to thee; 'Thou must love God more.' 'Thou must obey Him more.' '*This* displeases God.' 'Break off *this*.' 'Do *that*.' 'Art thou *sure*, that in *this* thou art not displeasing God?' These voices of God, within thee or without thee, were as clear to thee, and as distinct, and unmistakeable, as the voice which said to S. Paul, "[u] Saul Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Thou didst not, and couldest not doubt of them. The "still small voice" of God within thee, was as clear as the light which struck Saul to the earth. Thou didst not

[s] 1 Tim. i. 13. [t] 1 Cor. xv. 31. [u] Acts ix. 4.

doubt from Whom it came, or what it said to thee. Thou heardest. Didst thou hearken? As thou didst hearken, or no; or so far as thou didst hearken, or didst turn away, so was thy mind quickened or dulled for all the teaching of God there-after.

But not to listen to God's voice, (evil and perilous though it be) is a far lesser evil than to *will*, *not* to listen to it. Men *fail* to listen, through the impulse of passion; they *will*, not to listen, through deliberate choice. A single sin, grave though it be, is of human infirmity; to defer repentance, when called, is deliberately to reject God. God promises abundantly mercy to all who repent. To those who will not repent *now*, He does not promise time for repentance, nor grace to repent, nor that they will have the will whereby to repent.

1. He does not promise you time. One time is our's, *now*. The past is gone; the future is not yet. One time we ever *have*, a time fleeting by, while I speak and you listen, an ever-passing present. God renews to us this *present* again, and again, in every moment of our being. But at all times, we have only this *one* present moment, as our own. The past is fixed; the future is God's. What is *now*, will soon be past and out of our power. You can attend, or pray, or resolve, at this moment. When the next is come, you may, if God's grace continues, do the same. But you cannot efface what you have done; you cannot replace what you have left undone. To say, then, that you will repent to-morrow, is only to say, 'I will not repent to-day.' It is, courteously to put off God, as men put off a troublesome creditor, saying, 'come to-morrow;' lying to

him, as they know while they say it, meaning only to escape his importunity now, and then hoping not to meet him, or trusting in some way to escape him, on the morrow. Man may be put off thus; God alloweth Himself again and again to be put off thus; but 'to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow creep on this petty pace from day to day.' And still thou art no nearer. Each 'to-morrow' has its own 'to-morrow.' Each 'to-morrow' will have its own 'to-morrow' with thee to the end. Yesterday's to-morrow is to-day. If thou didst delay yesterday, is thy 'to-morrow' come? Thou knowest that, as long as thou sayest 'to-morrow I will repent,' that 'to-morrow' will 'never come.' But there will be a morrow which will have no to-morrow, except eternity. God has promised pardon to the penitent, but where has He promised a morrow to the procrastinator? Why should it not be said of those who delay repentance, "[x]Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee?"

2. He has not promised thee grace. He gives His grace at all times gratis, that is freely. We have no claim upon it; else it were not grace, but debt. He gives it largely, abundantly, overflowing, without, beyond, against our deserts. But He gives it with wisdom also. He gives it, although it is abused; but He does not give it, in order that it should be abused, or to encourage man's abuse of it. But it would be to encourage man's abuse of it, to store it up for those, who not only again and again refuse it, but who refuse it *now*, because they may have it hereafter. To such God Himself says, "[y]Despisest thou the riches of His forbearance and

[x] S. Luke xii. 20. [y] Rom. ii. 4, 5.

goodness and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the Day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God." What is it but to make the mercy of God the occasion of sin, to sin on now, because God is so good, that thou thinkest that He will give thee grace to repent hereafter?

And when wishest thou, that He should give thee grace to amend? Next year? or the next? or the next? No! In none of these, if thou art even thus far honest with thyself, dost thou wish to amend. When then? In the next, or the next, or the next? No, not yet. How is this? Because thou knowest full well, that even in these six years, thy passions will not be exhausted, thy desires will not be weakened; the wants which thou suppliest unlawfully, will still be craving; the evil habits, which thou nurturest, will be even strengthened; the embers of thy earthly fires will not have died out. 'When then,' God may ask, 'wilt thou choose ME?' Alas, if thou speakest truly, thou wilt say, 'when I have nothing else to prefer to Thee.' "[z] When the evil days come, in which my soul shall say, I have no pleasure in them;" then I will,—what? choose Him, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise, the All-Glorious, the All-Good, the All-Holy, the All-Bountiful, the All-Beautiful, the All-Loving; Who made thee for Himself, Who giveth thee all thou hast and art, Who willeth that thou shouldest be His, and He thine for ever? No! if thou wilt

[z] Eccl. xii. 1.

for once speak truly, thou hast no heart for any of this. God is nothing to thee. Thou wantest, willest, wishest nothing of God, but to escape Him. It is not God thou choosest, but thyself still. Thou willest to be so far His, that He shall not punish thee for ever. One thing alone thou really choosest, impunity in sin. For when is it, that people choose for themselves this pictured repentance? Never do they picture themselves repenting in the days of strength; never, while their temptations are strong upon them; never while ambition has something more to gain, or pleasure something more to enjoy, or vanity something for which to be admired. No! Those who picture to themselves *future* repentance, picture to themselves at best only the exchange of pleasure for pleasure, unlawful pleasure, it may be, for lawful; but mostly they picture to themselves a time, when they shall be worn out to the world, and the world to them, in sickness or death. *Then* they would give up what they cannot keep; they would part with what has parted with them; and they would receive in exchange,—not God, Whom they know not of, but—in some way, they know not how, escape from hell.

3. But wilt thou then have the will to repent? Judge of the future from the past. Think of the time, when thou wert just hesitating on the borders of sin, when it first looked pleasant to thee, when first thou wast tempted to some slight forbidden gain, to take some little thing which was not thine, to give way to some childish or youthful vanity, to taste some slight forbidden pleasure. If thou hast not repented yet, hast thou more or less mastery over

thyself, now than then? is it easier to thee to abstain from greater sin *now*, than from lesser sin *then?* Too surely, thy bands have been bound faster around thee; thy desires have become stronger; thy will weaker. People sin, out of the very habit of sinning. A single slight touch, and they are, as it were, paralyzed! a word, and they obey! a look, and they are subdued to sin! a thought, and the sin is done! Think back on the time of thy early prayers, thy freshness of mind, thy ignorance of sin, the simplicity of thy heart; picture to thyself thy childhood, when thou hadst not much undone God's work in thee, when Baptismal grace was not worn away, and think, what thou art now! If thy soul is less alive to the sinfulness of sin, than it once was; if it cost thee less resistance to do it; if thou have less remorse when the sin is done, than thou once feltest; if it is become more a nature to thee; if things which shocked thee at first, are now become familiar to thee; what ground hast thou to think, that thou wilt have a stronger will to accept God's grace and subdue thy sin, hereafter than heretofore? Except for the grace of God, the sin changes; not the sinner. The outward form of the sin changes; but the heart of the sinner, until it obey God's grace, loves sin, not God. Sin wears out the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength; not itself. It lives on upon the life of soul and body. It lives upon their destruction; but itself thrives and is vigorous in their decay. You have seen the fungus, unsubstantial, putrid, stinking, disgusting, poisonous, fed from the yet living tree. You know it to be the token of decaying life on which it feeds. Such is sin. Its seat is in the will. It cor-

rupts the will. The corrupted will anticipates the sin in act; it survives the power to enact. Avarice, falsehood, hatred, censoriousness, vanity, hypocrisy, love of ill-gotten goods, impurity, will live on in the aged sinner's soul; they will accompany him to the last; they will pass out of this world with him and in him; but whither will they accompany him? Will they escort him, as an angel-train, guarding him from the evil spirits, who wait for the departure of the disembodied soul, to seize on their lawful prey? Will they carry him to Abraham's bosom, into the realms of peace and truth and love, where nothing defiled shall enter? Will they present him before the judgement-seat of Christ, Who bids us to love one another as He has loved us, to purify ourselves as He is pure, to deny ourselves as He denied Himself, and emptied Himself of His glory, that He might take our shame, and thereby bring us to partake of His glory and His love?

To wait until some time, when, as thou thinkest, God shall call thee effectually, is to deny His past and present truth and grace and love, that He has been calling thee heretofore, is calling thee now. Is this the way, think you, to obtain greater grace, to deny God's past and present mercies to you? Every check thou hast ever felt as to any sin, though thou heedest it not; every occasion, in which thou didst balance between good and evil, although, it ended in thy choosing evil; every remorse thou hast ever felt at any sin, although it issued in thy returning to thy sin on the next temptation; every weak purpose thou ever hadst to amend, though it ended in thy breaking thy promises to Almighty God; every ter-

ror thou didst ever feel at thy sin, every pang of a guilty conscience; every longing to be at peace with God, although thou didst turn away from it, stifle it, deny it, bury it under renewed sin in order to forget thyself and God; everything in which thy soul has differed from the most hardened sinner, has been of the grace of God.

But to hope to repent hereafter, to serve God better hereafter, to love God and break off what displeases Him, *only not now*, is not from God, it is a deceit from the Evil one; understand me well, my brethren, to long to serve God better, *if* thou begin, aim, set about, in ever so slight a thing, serving Him better now, is a drawing of God's grace, for it draws thee towards Himself. But to picture to thyself that thou wilt serve Him better hereafter without setting about reforming something now which displeases Him! What else is it but the language of the disobedient son, "I go, Sir, and he went not."

God has been calling you, my brethren, by pestilence heretofore, by impending pestilence now, by invasion, by dearth, by rumours of wars, and now by war itself, to repent and turn to Him. All are tokens of His displeasure with sin. All are His voice. 'Repent, lest a worse thing happen to thee.' A worse thing remains yet from which God has for two hundred years preserved us, war in our own land. Such are its horrors that a man would wish well-nigh to be alone in the world that none might suffer from it except himself.

This is in the hands of God. Prayer has abated pestilence among us heretofore. Prayer may bring this dreadful war to a speedy close. Picture to your-

self one part of it only. In one battle of the last European war 50,000 lay dead on either side. That one battle left some 100,000 widows, the children of some 100,000 fathers, fatherless. Picture to yourselves each of their desolate homes, many of them were such as you; picture to yourselves one by one, the widows' grief, the children looking for their father and he was not, and think you whether sin be not a dreadful evil which God allows so to be chastened, and pray more earnestly that God will have mercy upon this land and upon you. But a more terrible day cometh, a Day of more terrible parting. As you would stand before Him in that Day, as you would not in that Day be parted from those you love, if you have not repented of sin, repent *now*. "Behold *now* is the day of salvation." To-morrow is God's. It is uncertain to thee. The *grace* of to-morrow, thine own *will* to-morrow, is not thine now. Only this is probable. As to-day so will to-morrow be, and to-morrow and to-morrow, until the last to-morrow ends the to-day of an ever fixed eternity. Trust in God, only turn to Him. Whatever the past may have been, He will efface it so thou turn to Him now. Thy sins, were they as red as scarlet may be made white as wool, so thou with purpose of heart repent and pray Him that, for love of Him, ye may sorrow that ye ever offended Him, and you may hope all of Him, all treasures of mercy; all riches of goodness; pardon, complete, full, with no more memory of sin, save that when thou rememberest it thou wilt love Him the more Who forgave it; and boundlessness of His boundless love, and that for evermore.

SERMON IV.

PERIL OF RELAPSES.

S. John v. 14.

"*Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*"

We are encircled, on all sides, by fearful judgements, and aweful mercies. God's judgements in this world are aweful mercies; mercies neglected are fore-runners of heavier judgements. Well then may we say to-day, "[a] My song shall be of mercy and judgement." We have met to thank God for a largeness of His bounty, unusual in its fulness, and seasonable above all other years, which "[b] He has crowned with His Goodness." For had the fruits of the earth failed us at home, war would have cut off what might mitigate our privations. War yet hangs around us; pestilence has been in our very city, as you know, fierce and resistless, where God permitted. Yet of all wars, that our people has ever fought, since it became a nation, there has as yet been, in this, the least sacrifice of our country's sons; the fewest Eng-

[a] Ps. ci. 1. [b] Ps. lxv. 12.

lish homes have been as yet desolated; the fewest wives have been as yet made widows; fewest children have become fatherless. Fierce as the pestilence was where it struck, God has said to the destroying Angel; "[c] Stay now thine hand."

Yet what thoughts have you had, my brethren, when you have read in Holy Scripture of the plagues of Egypt, that God sent murrain among the cattle, or slew the first-born, or when, in the time of the Judges, "[d] He gave the people into their enemies' hands;" or the plague slew three and twenty thousand, or when "[e] He gave them their desire and sent leanness withal into their souls?" Does not it seem strange to you, that they "[f] made haste and forgat His works and waited not for His counsel?" It has ever been a taunt of infidels, that God's own people could not have believed the miracles which they so soon forgat. Alas! they have but to look around them, to see the like. We hear in Holy Scripture the threatenings of Almighty God; "[g] The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew." Yet what are most of these, but afflictions which God has, through these many years, sent upon this land? No living prophet tells us; "this is God's Hand." We are wont to think of mildew and the changes of the seasons, as the course of nature; and of consumption and fever, as ordinary diseases; and 'a sickly season' has become a way of speaking amongst us; and we account for it by

[c] 1 Chron. xxi. 15. [d] Jud. ii. 14. [e] Ps. cvi. 13.
[f] Ib. 13. [g] Deut. xxviii. 22.

the 'wetness of the spring,' or the prevalence of the east wind; and we ask not, who "[h] caused the east-wind to blow under heaven," or "[i] hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of the thunder?" The more we know of the nearest causes of the changes around us, the less we think of Him "[k] Who changeth them and they are changed, but He abideth the Same." The more we know of the ways in which God works, the more men forget God Who worketh. But God interprets to us in His Word, what He yet doeth in His works. He tells us, that whatever laws of birth, or decay, He has impressed upon our creation, by whatever laws "[l] the wind whirls about continually and returns according to his circuits," or the rain falls, or is withheld from falling, all things of nature are subject to a higher law than the laws of nature; a moral law, the law and will of Him, Who ordereth all "[m] for correction, or for mercy." Yet not only so; but there is yet an inner, deeper, law of God. If we neglect God's judgements, God strikes more heavily, unless He abandon the sinner, as incorrigible. "[n] Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more."

"Thirty-eight years" had this poor man been afflicted, and, as we learn, for sin. God chastens for sin, or for trial, or for growth in grace. Elsewhere He forbids man to judge for himself, that another man is afflicted for sin. "[o] Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Here, He Him-

[h] Ps. lxxviii. 26. [i] Job xxxviii. 25. [k] Ps. cii. 27. [l] Eccl. i. 6.
[m] Job xxxvii. 13. [n] Isa. i. 5. [o] S. John ix. 3.

self reveals to us, that He does send personal chastisements for a man's own sins; as, when He elsewhere says to the paralytic; "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Thirty-eight years had he waited in patience for his Deliverer. More than half the life of man had he been stricken and borne the punishment of his sin; day by day had he been brought within sight of his cure, and been taken back unhealed. Others he saw healed; his own sickness hindered him from obtaining the means of healing. Jesus came; kindled his faith; taught him to hope for a cure; and gave him back in a moment, although now probably in advanced age, his early strength. The man, who knew not his Deliverer, went to thank God in His temple, as we are met this day. Jesus reminds him of the past sin, for which he had been thus chastened; and, for the time to come, He bids him, "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." "Sin no more." The poor man had not known his Deliverer. Our Lord's words revealed to the grateful penitent, that He Who spake to him, knew his inmost soul. His sufferings had lasted on during thirty eight years, more than the earthly life of his Saviour. The generation which had known the sins of his youth were mostly gone, each to his account. A few grey-headed men had perhaps seen and known his sin; perhaps they knew it not; perhaps no one had ever known it, save himself. But conscience needs no reflection. Conscience, awakened, responds at once. "'Sin no more!' his conscience would say; 'sin no more,' He says to me. *Then* He knows, that I *have* sinned, and how often and how much I have

sinned. He Who knows my heart, and my acts and my life, as God only can know me, warns me to 'sin no more,' as I have sinned; 'lest a worse thing come unto' me. What is that 'worse thing,' worse than these thirty-eight years of suffering and privation and helplessness, a withered, wasted, half-dead, hopeless, aimless, joyless, life, an existence which seemed to be lengthened out, only for suffering? What *is* that 'worse thing?'" What that "worse thing" was to the poor man, he now knows. He knows it, we trust, afar off, through the mercy of our Redeemer. He knows, as we shall, each one of us, know for himself, what sufferings or shame or tortures of this life, what horrible misery hereafter, we, through our Redeemer's mercy, shall have escaped, if, through His grace, we listened to His gracious, loving, merciful, aweful, warning; "Sin no more." In our Judge's mouth, the "worse thing" contained a distinct volume of warning for every conscience which should, during all these centuries of this world of trial, hear these warning words. To each sinful soul, it meant each and every successive chastisement, with which God rebukes, visits, checks, affrights, unrepented sin, until the sinner yields, turns, surrenders himself to Him, or—perishes. As the sinner's guilt becomes worse, deeper, more obdurate, the "worse thing" becomes worse. It has almost countless degrees, in God's providence: but, at each step in sin, it becomes worse. Worse and worse and worse comes upon the sinner, whether the appointed fruit and offspring of his sin, or God's direct judgement upon it, until, if the sinner turn not, there comes the "worse thing," than which there can be

no worse, everlasting death, shut out from the presence of God and all good, in endless misery.

Ye cannot have been so encompassed with death, striking in a moment, where God sent it, and not have thought, 'What if it had been I?' Ye must have thought, 'To-morrow, it may be I.' We heard of one seized in a house of God like this, and in the evening a corpse. Ye must have thought, what, if death had in a few hours come on me, without time for thought, for repentance, for one prayer? What if, as Lot's wife became a pillar of salt, and remained where she was overtaken, encrusted and unchanged, the same, century after century, I had passed, just as I was, fixed unchangeably for all eternity? And with this thought, there followed, I hope, thoughts and desires and resolves, how to please God; how to become more, what God, in His eternal love, willed you to be; how you might be more faithful to His grace, might break off what offended Him; how you might live, as one bought by the Precious Blood of Christ, a child of God, an heir of heaven.

My brethren, it is a great thing, it is the earnest of life eternal, to have been touched by the grace of God. But it is an aweful mercy. No dispensation of God's providence, no act of His Goodness, no inward striving, no outward terror, no secret misgiving as to our state, nothing which moves, awakes, alarms, kindles our souls, leaves us where we were before. I do not say, (God forbid!) that relapse makes the case of the relapsed hopeless; but I mean, that every neglect of God's calls; every answer to those calls, "I go, Sir," and "he went not;" every fresh light upon the conscience, which a man obeys

not; every fresh sense of the love of God, upon which a man acts not, or from which he sinks back; every drawing of God's grace which a man follows for a while, but is not thereby drawn quite to God, leaves the last state of that man worse than the first. Plainly, in those who have turned to God and have chosen God for their portion, there will be infirmities, stumblings, haltings. "[p] If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." But there must, even in lesser things, be no deliberate choice of known evil. To choose evil, having known good, is a sin against light, a sin against grace, a sin against the known love of God, a deliberate choice of Satan before God.

All deadly sin, in such as have been Christianly brought up, must be sin against light, against grace, against the known love of God. It has nothing to plead to God. Without excuse, without defence, without plea, it must cast itself before the mercy-seat of Christ; it must clasp His sacred Feet, and sue for mercy on its misery. But it has a measure of ignorance, which, though it does not plead it, God regards. The sins of childhood are the parents of the worst sins of man, but they are not, in the child, what they become in the man. Some sins, by reason of his tender age, he cannot commit; what he does commit, are committed with the thoughtlessness of childhood; they have not the deliberate malice of the sins of elder years. The tide of sin deepens, darkens, thickens in foulness, as it bears downwards. But so it grows in foulness insensibly; sin gathers sin; sin prepares for worse sin; sin shades off into

[p] 1 S. John i. 8.

darker sin. The tainted atmosphere, in which the ripened sinner lives, has become, and is day by day becoming, more corrupt, more loathsome, more pestilential: but he himself has become so gradually accustomed to it, that he perceives it not. The imagination has become more defiled; self-indulgence is more confirmed; worldliness shuts out more and more the thought of God; lies, by which he excused his childish faults, have become the habit of his mind; his passions have become to him a law of his corrupt nature, and as he thinks, a necessity; petty fraud is now his way of business; outbreaks of passion are but the vent of an angered temper, as clouds discharge the rain or the lightning. He can yet thank God that he is not as some other men; he has yet some good in him, which he hopes is from God; sin confuses the conscience, dulls the mind, blinds the soul to itself: "[q] her guests are in the depths of hell." There is this hope alone left, that they knew it not, and that if they knew it, the grace of God might arouse them to long to burst their bonds; the power of God might strengthen their arms, and the cords fall off from them, as tow which the fire has touched, and *they* flee from the whole city of the plain, which God has doomed, ere the fire and brimstone fall from God and destroy it all.

The special misery of the relapsed, is, that they know all this, and still abide in the land of the darkness of sin which God has cursed. In whatever way God reaches the sinner's soul, He gives him a light which he had not before. True! it was his own fault that he had it not before, and so he is without

[q] Prov. ix. 18.

excuse before God: but God, in the riches of His mercy, opens his closed eyes, that he may see. Sudden deaths, like those now around us, preach to the soul, with a piercing, startling voice. There is no preacher, like sudden death. Death speaks to the inmost soul, 'thou too must be as he, and what then? "[r] What will it profit thee, if thou gain the whole world, and lose thine own soul?" What will thy pride, thy beauty, thy costly meats or drinks, the indulgence of thy appetites or passions, the flatteries of others, thy vantages in thy petty rivalries, the venting of thy ill-will, thy power over others, the world's praise, thine own self-applause, thy gain, or thy display or the riches of thine heirs, what will these and all besides avail, when thy body shall be like that chill, lifeless, decaying form, and thy soul shall be—where?' O! what a pang shoots through the soul at the question, 'Where?' How does the soul quail, shudder, quiver, congeal with fear, if it cannot answer, 'Where? Not of mine own merits, but through the mercy of my God, through the Blood of my Redeemer, in Whom I have believed, in Whom I have hoped, Whom, amid my sad shortcomings, I have loved and desired to serve, I hope to be with Christ, accepted in Him, saved by Him.'

But how does this lightning-flash of fear change all to the soul! Death flatters not. Death, and the sight of death, allow no masks, under which the sinner can lie hidden from himself: its stern, icy touch makes the tinsel garb of sin drop off, and lays bare the skeleton and the worms enwreathing it. Look well at it, poor sinner, look at it narrowly, and re-

[r] S. Matt. xvi. 26.

member it! This is the end of thy covetous gains; this, the fruit of thy excesses; for this, thou kindlest the fire of passion in thyself; for this, thou allowest to thyself what God forbiddeth; for this thou swearest, or defraudest, or backbitest, or malignest, or heapest up vanities, to end in this! And what shall be the fruit of all this, what the gain of all this, but endless loss?

The fear of God displeased leads men to God reconciled in Christ. The first sight of death has full often, been the spring of endless life. Brighter than the midday sun, like the light, amid which Saul fell to the earth, is the light, which issues from that thick darkness, and lights up time and eternity; present, and past, and future; hopes and fears; sin, guilt, broken resolutions, hopes, purposes, promises; ineffectual longings; self-deceit; blighted good; a life without an aim, without fruit, without a spot for memory to rest on; without an end, except hell! All stands out at once to the sinner's fixed gaze, in one blaze of light. All stands solid, real, as if to last for ever. All around him is one vast, trackless desert, blighted by the scorching blast and touch of death; all his past joys, delights, passionate pleasures, feverish successes, brightest triumphs, a parching sand-waste, mocking his thirst; before his feet a precipice, yawning into the bottomless pit; devils around him, to hurry him thither; himself powerless, transfixed, motionless, benumbed, corpse-like, unable to resist, or turn away, or shake off or refuse to follow the hateful, hated fiends, whom in his sins he had served; to whom, in his sinful gain, or fever-joy, he had sold himself; whom *now* he recognises as the

masters he had served, ready in mute, hopeless, despairing agony, to sink down and yield himself to them, as having lawfully become their own,—all this around him, himself in their clutches, and One Form before him, with pierced Hands and thorn-encompassed Brow and wounded Side, looking with an eye of tender, sorrowful, reproachful love upon him; stretching out His life-giving Hand of Power, which for him once became stiff, livid, cold in death, now ready to lead, guide, uphold him along a straight and narrow path, to brighter realms of bliss, if he will follow Him, cleave to Him, be held by Him unto the end.

And what, if he again forget all this? Wherewith shall he be roused, wherewith renewed, wherewith awakened, if he now sink down into the death-sleep of deadly sin? This is the misery of relapsed sinners. They have "been once enlightened:" What can one tell them, which they know not of already? Hell? They have seen it before them. God's judgements? They have fled from them once, and have returned to the sins, out of which the dread of those judgements scared them. The mercies of Christ? They have sought them and have despised them. The nothingness of the deadly pleasures, or passing gains, for which they barter their souls? They have known and felt that nothingness; they have once rejected those hateful pleasures, and the unlawful gains which feed those pleasures, or their pride, and they have now again swallowed the sickening defilements, which they had cast forth from them. The long-suffering of God, calling them to repentance? It is the very ground of their presumption. All we could tell

them, they know as well as we. All are familiar, daily, household truths, to which the ear has been deafened, because they have so often passed unheeded by. As well might one plow the sand, which the next tide will again make smooth as before! As well might one sow upon the rock, which no human strength can rive, but for the power of His grace, Who can "[s] turn the hard rock into standing water, and the flint-stone into a springing well."

Yet there is a worse evil than to have rejected the *light* of God. The relapsed reject His tasted *love.* It is of the goodness of God to soothe the bitterness of repentance, that He mostly gives to the awakened sinner some sense of the sweetness of His love. "[t] God chiefly, amid the beginnings of conversion, soothes the ulcers with the oil of mercy; so that neither the amount of the disease nor the difficulty of the cure, should be known, more than is expedient to the sinner.' What a day is that, when the soul is first freed from the bonds of sin; when it is no longer a slave to its passions, which it loathes; when it bears no more with it an ever-growing burden of sin, is no longer gnawed by the worm of conscience and the sense of its guilt, when it fears no more the wrath of God, but is the object of His love! What, when it first breathes freely the breath of Heaven, is shone upon by His love; its chill numbness is warmed; the dead heart again beats; the imprisoned spirit soars free to its God; the dried stiffened eye gushes forth in thankful tears; the slave of Satan becomes anew the child of God; the lover of hateful pleasures is received and enfolded in

[s] Ps. cxiv. 8. [t] S. Bern. De conv. c. 5.

the Arms of Jesus; the dwelling-place of devils becomes the Throne of the Trinity.

What if he return again from this new joy in God to joy in the world? What if, having made peace with God, he would again return to His Adversary? if, having taken the light yoke of Christ, he seeks again the heavy yoke of Satan? What is this, but deliberate contempt of God? He has known both; he compares both; he judges between both; 'he counts,' says a father, 'him the better, to whom he willeth to belong.'

Such is completed backsliding. But God rarely allows such an overthrow of the soul to take place at once. The soul has as many weaknesses as there are ways of sin, which it has known and yielded to. And if these weak points are left unguarded, they are so many avenues to sin and Satan. Yet still in whatever degree a sin is caused by wickedness, it is less from deliberate choice. Even grave backsliding, then, is not that choice of evil, for which there is no remedy, from which, but for the despised overwhelming mercy of God, there is no renewal. But each backsliding prepares for it. Each has the character of it. In sicknesses of the body, too, you know how one relapse is, many times, not death. Yet you know how, with each relapse, the hope that the sufferer will struggle through, is fainter; you know how, in critical diseases, a relapse would be almost certain death. God's mercy is not worn out. But each relapse of the soul makes the poor sinner more hopeless in his struggles. He wearies of this unceasing round of sinning and repenting, condemning what he does, and doing what he condemns; and so, at

last, he makes peace with himself. But, unless for some mighty, unhoped for, grace of God, it is the peace of death, a stupified conscience, an undisturbed in-dwelling of the seven evil spirits worse than the first, undisturbed by the presence of God, the voice of God, the terrors of God. It is the stillness of the grave, where corruption is felt no more.

My brethren, you recollect how God accounted it a sin with a high hand, when the chief of a tribe of Israel openly sinned when the congregation were weeping for the plague. So would it be now. The worst has not fallen upon us; but we have seen and known what, but for God's mercy, it might have been. We have heard, how in the neighbouring city, the disease, which visited us lightly, has in some few spots swept out streets and houses, like the plague. In one city of Europe, one third of the people, 10,000 souls were swept away, and it looked like a city of the dead.

What if it had been so among us? What if it were made known to us that in this congregation one third were to be taken? Should we not say longingly to our Lord, "[u] Lord, is it I?" Should we not, most of us, long to remain a little longer, to overcome some remaining infirmity, to grow in love, before we behold Him, face to face. What thou wouldest have done then, that do now. Of those gone out to war, the destroyer has been, as yet, not man chiefly, but God. The pestilence has devoured, when the sword has been spared. And yet here too, where hundreds of our own have fallen, thousands have fallen of the soldiers of other nations.

[u] S. Matt. xxvi. 22.

If you looked up and saw above your heads a sword hanging by a thread, and it was said to you, "sin no more, lest a worse thing may happen to you," you could not, while you saw it, go and do a deadly sin. The judgements of God are hanging over you; death is around you; hell is beneath your feet, its relentless fires can be crossed safely by one slight narrow bridge, the Cross of Christ. But will the Cross of Christ be a way in death to those who in life have not believed on it, have not owned it, have not loved it, have not borne it, have not been upborne by it, have not, through It, trampled on Satan and the world, and the world's delusive pleasures? "In the hour of death, and in the Day of Judgement, Good Lord, deliver us."

We are met to thank God. Wherewith shall we thank Him? with words or with deeds? in name or in truth? with our lips or with our lives? The Jews, before the Redeemer came, accompanied the sacrifice of praise with the sacrifice of their sheep and their oxen. The very word 'sacrifice' means, that we give up something which is ours, something which it is a cost to us to give up. "[x] Shall I sacrifice to God of that which costs me nothing?" says the pious David. Shall our thankfulness be less than the thankfulness of the Scribes and Pharisees?

Do we stand in need of the mercy of God, then let us shew mercy. "[y] He shall have judgement without mercy that hath shewed no mercy, but mercy rejoiceth over judgement." "[z] The merciful," our Blessed Lord says, "shall obtain mercy." Where? in this life, and not in the next? Our Lord does not so bind down

[x] 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. [y] S. James ii. 13. [z] S. Matt. v. 7.

His blessings. The blessings of the Gospel and the faithfulness of His promises are for ever. *There* shalt thou find mercy, where, but for the mercy of God in Christ, we were all undone. There where "the books shall be opened," where all our sins shall be unfolded, where we shall see the blackness of our unthankfulness, the hatefulness of deadly sin, the poorness of what we thought good in us, the evils of what we justified to ourselves, there, when in the holy Presence of God we could not endure ourselves, and our past selves would always be a hell to us, if we were compelled to bear them for ever with us, *there* shall we see all our past sins blotted out for ever by the Blood of Christ, and the Face of our Judge shall shine sweetly upon us. The scourge of the pestilence has made many fatherless. Cherish the fatherless, and "[a] the Father of the fatherless" will be thy Father. Relieve the widow, and "the God of the widow" will be thy God. Have pity on the poor, and God hath said, "I will repay thee." Do what in thee lies that others may be won to Christ, and Christ will own thee in His fellow-helpers. But with all and above all, give thyself to God Who has spared thee, Who has redeemed thee, Who has had mercy on thee, and He will take away thy sins, He will heal all thine infirmities, He will re-make thee, that thou mayest be His own for ever, that thou mayest be fitted to contain His Love, and for thyself He will give thee Himself to be thine for evermore.

[a] Ps. lxviii. 5.

SERMON V.

BACKSLIDING.

GAL. v. 7.

"Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?"

FEW have not, at some time, tasted and felt the grace of God. Few are at any time using it, living in it, living by it. Whence is it that the grace of God, so mighty, so powerful, so constraining, so sweet, so full of joy, has such little power over us, abides so little with us?

All must have tasted, at least, some drawings of the grace of God. God so watches for us: He so longs to make us wholly His own. He uses such variety of means to draw us away from our sins and to Himself: He so encircles and enfolds us in His Goodness. His very sternness, His judgements, His blows, His piercing wounds, are so many calls of His love.

In one way or another, God must have found us all by His grace. By weariness of things present, or by sweetness of things eternal; by disgust at the pleasures of sin, or by some pure delight of holiness; by remorse for sin indulged in, or by the soul-strengthening joy of using God's grace to overcome

sin; by hope or by fear; by terror or by love; by the gnawing of an evil conscience or through some sight or glimpse of the brightness of a good conscience, in some of these, or of His other manifold ways of speaking to the soul, God must have found out each of us, and said to our heart, 'My child, it is a weary service to serve the world; you *would* have rest and peace and bliss, if you knew where to find them; peace and rest and bliss are in Me. What ye want, seek in Me.'

You know, my brethren, He has spoken to each of you, and at some time or many times you have heard His Voice. You have heard it in a way in which some of you, I fear, do not hear it now. It spoke more freshly to your souls, and you heard it more readily; and you thought that you must begin better, must say your prayers more, or never miss or shorten them, or must be more earnest in them, or that you must break off this or that wrong habit or sin. Now some of you will have put off God to a more convenient season. Some will have said, 'Not yet; I must have my pleasure, or what I need now, and turn to God hereafter.' Some will have shut their ears altogether. And these are the worst cases. But there is another set of minds, which do listen to God for a while, who wish to do something for Him, who long to be safe from His anger and to be at peace with Him, and so are ever beginning yet never bringing anything to any ripeness. Such our Lord warns, as those who "[a] with joy receive the word, yet have no root in themselves, but dure for a while, and in time of temptation fall away."

[a] S. Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

Why is this? As it is the greatest triumph of the grace of God and the joy of the holy Angels, when the lost sinner is found, so it seems the greatest reproach to the power of God's grace and to His goodness, when one who had begun to serve Him, grows weary of His service. God's arm is not shortened; His grace and His mercies fail not. It may save *us* from being wanting to them, to think, in what ways some who have, by that grace, once been turned to God and brought near to Him, again fall away.

Of all changes, there has, probably, been the least inward change, when the change has been wrought chiefly through outward happier circumstances of this life. Outward changes in themselves work nothing inward. Yet God, by His providence, makes room for the workings of His grace. He takes us out of the temptations, which, through inured custom, were too strong for us, and gives us some safe vent for that which was the occasion of sin. Thus, people rebel against some trial, and God removes it; or they go about to gain a thing unlawfully, and God gives it them lawfully; or they pine for some human object to satisfy them, losing sight of or not contented with God, and God gives them their heart's desire. He Who knoweth whereof we are made, changes our trial, if so be we will even thus serve Him. Well is it, if we even then walk humbly and thankfully, and seek to please God in the easier trials which He allots us. Few, probably, who have any sense of God at all, have not thanked Him. Those who from their inmost heart have thanked Him, through His grace have they thanked Him, and for

the time tasted of His grace in that they thanked Him, and in their measure loved Him for His gifts. Why then do they fall short of God's grace? On *this* ground, that if we are not aiming at something above ourselves, we are living a life of nature, not of grace. If we live a life of nature, we do not use grace, we forfeit grace; and our corrupt nature anew finds its way. Whatever our life may be, whatever our trial, if we are not aiming to lift up our nature above its level, we sink below it. The old nature has its way. Refined sins take the place of coarse sins. People rest on their oars, because they are out of the strong current of passion, by which they were once borne down. A smooth noiseless stream carries people as swiftly down as one which foams and boils. Smooth, easy ways of sin sweep people away the more hopelessly, because they disturb them not, awaken them not, rouse not the conscience, stir not up the slumbering powers of the soul to resistance. Such sinners are free from the gross outward acts of sin; but they sin in their imagination, in their will, in their affections. Safe from one form of sin, which beset them formerly, they feel secure as to all other sin, because they are free from this, and so they fall, without sorrow, into whatever other sin lies in wait for them. They can congratulate themselves about themselves, 'Soul, thou dost not this, which thou didst formerly. It is well with thee. Thou art at peace with God.' They remember their former selves, only to thank God that they are not now, what they once were; as though it were a very fruit and reward of having fallen into deep sin, that they might be secure about

sins, which affright those who have sinned less deeply, and as if their very virtue were to be stained now with fewer sins!

And yet Christendom is full of such Christians as these; Christians with no out-standing sin, nor yet with one grace; whose whole life is one blank; with whom man finds no fault, and in whom God finds no fruit; who, day by day, are gaining nothing and so are day by day losing everything; on whom nothing makes impression, because they have become dulled to all; unpained, but it is the painlessness of a mortified wound; undisturbed, but it is a death-sleep; in repose, because Satan is no longer restless, when he has entered into the house whence he was cast out, and has taken his abode there.

Others, again, lose grace, in that they expose themselves to the temptations of pleasure, wherein they before lost it. "Concerning propitiation" says the wise man, "be not without fear, to add sin to sin[b]." Sin finds entrance most easily, where it has found it before. The will is weakest there, temptation strongest. Habit has a power of its own. It is the blessing of innocence not to know how to sin. What is free from danger to the innocent, is full of danger to those who have known sin. People do not *mean* to fall again into the sin, of which they have repented. But tinder catches any spark. The soul which knows sin, may be kindled by any thing which recalls its past sin. To begin it is to end it. It is in vain for such to protest that they do not mean, wholly to fall. If you put yourself anew in circumstances under which you before fell, in the sight of God you

[b] Ecclus. v. 5.

will to fall. Again and again, there is the same round. A person admits some wrong thought, which he knows will lead to wrong acts. In vain he says, I mean to stop short. "Be not without fear," God says; "to add sin to sin." The thought always before went on and on until it led to wrong acts; so it will be now. Or he commits some petty fault or negligence, or yields to some little wrong habit, which he has before been tempted to hide by a lie. "Be not without fear," God says again; "to add sin to sin." If you would escape falling into the peril of the lie, you must be steadfast against the petty fault or negligence, which before out of shame, you hid by that lie. It matters not how little a thing it is. A lie is a great sin in God's sight. People have been bound down for years in one weary wretched round of lying and repenting, because they were not steadfast against some petty self-indulgence, which they were ashamed to own.

Or a man goes into some company in which he has been tempted to make light of sin, to use God's word lightly, or to blaspheme His Name; to lose his temper, to speak wrong words, to indulge himself wrongly, to use some familiarity which has ever ended in sin. Or he goes to some place, where he has found sin before, or where sin has found him; or at some wrong hour when man's eye is not upon him, although God's Eye sees him. It is in vain to pretend that you mean not to do, what you did before, as often as you placed yourself under the same circumstances, when you went into the same company, frequented the same places. "God is not mocked." "Be not without fear," He says, "to add

sin to sin." Judge of the present by the past. If the sight of a heap of wood tempted you to steal, to go within sight of it, is to *will* to steal. And so as to any other thing, the presence of which tempts you to any sin. Be the sin a sin of the body, or a sin of the soul; a coarse sensual sin or a refined sin; a sin of vanity or of passion, of self-display or of pride; to place yourself willingly where you before ever fell, is to *will* to fall, and to forfeit the grace, the love, the mercy, the pardon of Almighty God.

It is an aweful gift to have recovered grace. It is a precious mercy of God, to be again entrusted with that grace which we had before forfeited. But the more precious it is, the more carefully it is to be guarded. Carelessness, before a fall, may be ignorance, passion, infirmity of nature. Carelessness, after you have been restored from falling, is sin against light; it is to reject the mercy of God in Christ. Good is it, when God gives the grace of tears. Good is it for the soul, when God makes her to taste and feel, how weary and unsatisfying the world and its pleasures are, what sweet rest and peace there is in loving Him. Sweet, precious, transporting to the soul is that first thought; 'Then I am again the child of God; then Jesus has again cleansed me with His Blood, and I am an object of His mercy and His love.' Yet this first gush of penitential sorrow, given by God the Holy Ghost, may flow on to everlasting life, or it may dry up. The strongest emotions are not necessarily the deepest or the most lasting. The tears of penitence which flow the fastest, often flow the fastest away. The bounding joy in finding anew the forgotten Saviour,

which is uttered most ardently, may die away the soonest. Hot water freezeth soonest. True conversion to God is not a passing feeling, not exulting gladness in the boundless love of God, not swelling thankfulness for His redeeming mercies; it lives not in ardent emotions, impulses, nor even in burning desires to live more to God, and to be more faithful to Him. It includes all these, but it goes beyond them. It is to hate what God hates, and love what God loves; it is to hate one's self for having loved what God hated, and hated what God loved; and to grieve that too late we loved Him. It is to love Him Who died for us, and bore with us, and forgave us, and loving Him, to cleave to Him. Its seal is perseverance through His grace unto the end.

This then is another and a very frequent cause of forfeiting the grace of God, that people think that it will abide with them, as a matter of course, and are not watchful to retain it. And so, as a matter of course, they lose it.

"[c] Watch and pray," said our Blessed Saviour, "that ye enter not into temptation." To watch, alone, would imply that all were in our own power; to pray only, would imply that God did all for us, without ourselves. But now God wills to join our faithfulness with His gift of grace; and to make His grace ours through ourselves. "Pray," He says; for without the grace of God ye can do nothing; "Watch," He says; for without *you*, the grace of God will do nothing in *you*. "Pray," that ye may have grace; and "watch," that ye may use it. But of those who have tasted the grace of God, some watch

[c] S. Matt. xxvi. 41.

not at all; some watch only for a time; and so both come into temptation, and fall through it.

Some seem to make it even a system to themselves not to watch. They think that without watching God's grace will keep them from greater sins; and that into lesser sins, whether they watch or no, they *must*, through weakness and corruption of our nature, fall. They scarcely put this, in so many words, to themselves; but they act it. They think that, through a self-renouncing faith, and trust in Jesus only, all will, without fail, be right. A loving self-renouncing faith *will* do all things, through the grace of Christ, inworking it. But watchfulness is part of that loving faith. It is part of faith, to do, by the grace of Christ, what He commands; "watch." It is part of love, to be watchful, not to do what Christ forbids, to be alive to every wile of Satan, every deceitfulness of our own heart, every illusion of the world, every treachery of our own will, every inward temptation from ourselves, every outward enticement from others; which might, even for a moment, separate or detach us, by a hair's breadth, from the love of Christ.

God teaches us this within, at times, when He stirs our minds. Is it not so, my brethren, when conscience pricks you, when sudden deaths alarm you, when the thought of your own death, and Judgement after death, frightens you? Does not the thought always come to you, of something in you, which you must amend? Yes! when weary and heavy laden, frightened at yourselves, in awe of God's judgement, you cast yourselves at the Feet of Jesus, you felt then that you had wounds to be

healed, that you had need to be watchful over yourselves, lest you should re-open them. You felt, not only that you must give up certain things which displeased God, but that you must guard all the approaches to them. If you were in earnest, it was even a joy to you to picture yourselves to yourselves, firm, when you had given way; careful as to your speech, when in words you had offended God or injured your neighbour: strict with yourselves, when you had allowed yourselves liberties; exact as to your prayers, when you had been negligent; loving, when you had been sullen or churlish. *Then*, God brings to the soul, not only the vague general wish, that you had never displeased Him, that you might ever please Him; but He sets vividly before the soul, certain things which it must do or must not do, if it would remain in His favour. He teaches the soul where its perils lie; He puts into the heart to resolve this or that. Those resolutions come before it, are borne in upon it, as clear as the light. It has no doubts *then*; it forms new resolves; for a time it acts upon them.

But any rule is a yoke. Man's nature is inconstant, loves change, hates restraint, even in the very least things. And then the temptation comes to think; 'Was not this, after all, a needless scruple? Must I be stricter than others? Am I to think that this or that person, who is not so strict with himself, will not be saved? Such an one is more educated than I am, and once he was more serious than I; can he mean to damn himself? If they may be saved without these restrictions, why not I?'

And then they compare themselves with those who

have not the same temptations; and because *these*, whose temptations lie not on this side, need not the same precautions as to sins, to which they are not by nature inclined; neither, (Satan tells them) do they. As though if thou wert on a slippery path, or on ice which scarcely supported thee, thou neededst not to take heed lest thou fall, or fall through, because thy neighbour, near thee, were on firm hard dry ground.

Our Lord says to thee, as He did to S. Peter; "[d] What is that to thee? follow thou Me." Each soul has its own history, its own trials, its own weak points, which it must guard, or it will perish. Each will have to give account of himself before the Judgement-seat of Christ. *They* hear not what God speaks to thy conscience, nor *thou* what He speaks to theirs. But in times of anguish, of fear, of loneliness, of sorrow, God speaks to *thee*. Thou hearest Him clearly *then*. Thou doubtest not that it is His Voice. Tamper not with the thought afterwards. Question not afterwards, what was clear then. It were unfaithfulness to God to *wish* to doubt. It is ingratitude to Him, Who shed light around thee, to wish to be again in darkness. It is the mind of a slave, not of a child of God, to question as to what God has once taught thee, 'need I do this?' It is to count the very mercies of God, a burden to thee, to wish to be as others, whom God has not taught, has not led by the hand; to whose heart He has not spoken as effectually and clearly as He once did to thine. If it *were* a matter of doubt, which way should the doubt incline, but to choose and to love

[d] S. John xxi. 22.

what, you think, *may* be the Will of God? For in so choosing, thou most surely choosest His Love.

If then, may be, God removes from you any outward temptation, if, in any thing He gives you without temptation, what you once sought in sin, be not satisfied nor rest in this, but shew thy thankfulness by thy deeds. Repent, at least, that thou didst sin. Although thou canst not shew thy repentance in that surest way, by breaking off and conquering that one sin, and casting it away for ever, for love of Jesus; at least shew thy repentance in some other way, by increased faithfulness to God, by conquering thyself in some remaining trial, by doing something for the love of God.

If God has spoken to thy soul, if He has shewn thee that thy ways are leading thee to thy destruction, beware, as thou valuest thy soul, that thou place not thyself in those occasions of sin, whereby thou didst before forfeit it. See that thou question not afterwards, what at the time thou didst not doubt; that you part not with anything which you once thought that God taught you clearly: that you desire not to leave, what God once shewed you to be the way of salvation.

Think what your prize is. All on earth is so fleeting, and God Alone abideth for ever; the pleasures of sense are so unsatisfying, and in God there is such fulness of joy; time is so very short, eternity so long; the whole world and the glories of it, without God, are emptiness which can never fill the soul which was made for God; and God Himself Alone is all things and hath all things, and can and will fill you with such transporting joy; peace in God is so assured,

so tranquil, so blissful, and all out of God is so restless, so unquiet, so disquieting! O gaze upwards, and pray God to quicken your sight and to fix your gaze, and when temptation next comes unto you, say to Him, "[e] Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my Portion for ever."

[e] Ps. lxxiii. 24, 25.

SERMON VI.

NATURAL GOOD AND EVIL.

Rom. xi. part of v. 24.

"*Thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree.*"

Each of us came into the world with his own special temper, his own natural good and natural evil. Each had his own special leaning towards some virtue or some vice. No two persons are, even by nature, exactly alike. You see this in children. Before they themselves know good or evil, even while they lie on their mother's breast, you may often see the character, likely to be unfolded in the future man or woman. This is the natural soil of the human heart, which God, the Great Husbandman, digs, breaks up, by His providences or by His Word and by His Spirit, softens by His grace, enriches by the richness of His gifts by the Holy Ghost Which He pours out into our hearts. Yet, however it be changed, the soil, though it bring forth good fruit, instead of briars and thorns, is, in some respects, the same soil still. The natural character is the wild stock, of whatever sort, upon which He grafts through His grace the fruit-bearing slip. Strong it often is,

vigorous, full of wild life, sending out noble shoots, beautiful to the eye, rich in colour, luxuriant of leaves, but—barren, or, by its own inherent faultiness of nature, acrid and bitter and unsavoury. This, when God has cultivated it, bedewed it by His Spirit, and changed that bitter juice of nature by His grace which is above nature, yields its own flowers and fruit to adorn the Paradise of God. Of all the countless varieties of tempers, tastes, minds, feelings, talents, faculties, He wreathes together that everlasting, unfading crown of His redeemed, with which He vouchsafes to be encircled. Flower differs from flower; but each has its own beauty in the eyes of Him Who made them for His Glory. Star differs from star; but each shines with its own lustre and radiance in the glorious company of Heaven. Fruit differs from fruit; but each fruit, which He has ripened by the glow of the Sun of Righteousness, has its own flavour and sweetness and fragrance.

We see the more, some little portion of God's Infinite Wisdom, in the exhaustless variety of things, which He has made. We see much more in the countless multitude of souls whom He has redeemed out of every nation, condition, age, temper, endowment, and has formed them all, to be without fault, reflecting each, some special loveliness from His Infinite Beauty, as they shine in the brightness of His unchanging love.

He formed each of us, my brethren, to be, if we will, of that blessed happy company. He formed each of us, day by day, out of that formless mass in our mother's womb. He Who so formed us, willeth anew, by a new creation, to reform that shapeless

mass of mingled good and bad, of wayward tempers, capricious humours, those uneven, uncertain, unsteadfast, wavering selves, which most of us still are. He willeth to ennoble by His grace, whatever good we have by nature, to replace by His grace, what, by nature, we have of evil.

No one is born with all natural good, and none is born all evil. God, in His manifold wisdom, gives to each of us certain inclinations to good; He allows us to inherit from the corruption of Adam certain tendencies to evil. We have each, by nature, so to say, our strong points, and our weak ones; our bad points and our good ones.

Now, both as to ourselves and as to children whom we have to educate we many ways mistake as to both, our natural good and our natural evil. People turn both against God. They rob God of His honour, by claiming their natural good, as their own. They blaspheme God, by casting the blame of their sins into which, through following this natural evil temper, they fall, upon God Who made them so. They neglect in themselves and their children, to train, prune, cherish, cultivate, weed what is good, or to cut out what is evil. They think that nature must have its course both ways. They say of a child, He is a wild boy and must have his way; or they think of one, She is a gentle child, and so all must be right. People overlook, at once, the corruption of man's nature, and the might of God's grace. Man's tendency to evil, and the power of God's grace to remove that evil, are far mightier than men think. Men praise themselves, and they excuse themselves, alike wrongly. And in both ways

they miss the good which God intended for them, Who would transform passing gleams of natural goodness into likeness with His own Nature, and the ruggedness of our unrenewed nature into the solid, holy strength of His Divine.

There is risk, nay, not risk but certainty, that what is good in you by nature, will, but for the grace of God, turn to evil. By His grace, what is evil in you may not only be effaced, but, by the miracle of His Goodness, may be turned into real everlasting good. Strange weakness of us poor men, my brethren, that our very good will, if we are left to ourselves, turn to evil! Strange power and goodness of the grace of God, that, if we trust ourselves with Him, He will turn our very evil into some good of His! In truth, evil and good lie so close together, that men's natural good is liable to evil, prone to evil, shades off into evil, lays us open to some evil akin to it; and, on the contrary, evil, being often but some wrong way of gaining or using what is good, becomes, when corrected by the grace of God, solid good.

This will be plainer to you, if I speak of some of the things themselves. We all love a sweet, easy, kindhearted, gentle, natural, temper; most of us shrink naturally from one who is obstinate, unyielding, self-willed, rebellious, violent. Undoubtedly, the soft easy temper is very winning; the rough hard temper is unattractive. Yet, without God's grace, that easy temper will, like wax, be pliant to any evil; that hard temper, like the rough marble-block, may receive blow upon blow, and, in the end, retain for ever that Image of its Maker in which He has re-fashioned it.

The very temptation to deadly evil in one half of the souls for whom Christ died, those of women, lies in this very pliancy, a readiness to do what God forbids, sooner than refuse what man wilily asks. There can hardly be a character, powerful to good, which, but for God's grace, would not be mighty to evil. There has not been a character, mighty for evil, infidel, heretic, ambitious conqueror, destroyer of law and rule, depraver of morals, corrupter of the soul, because corrupted, selfish defiler of God's image and temple, who has not in him the capacity of good proportionate, had he used faithfully the grace of God or acted according to the light from God within him. The burning, fiery, tormenting thrones of hell are filled with those who have missed the glorious thrones of heaven. The deepest depths of hell are probably filled by those whom God formed, if they had willed to use His grace, for the highest heights of Heaven: Apostles or Apostates! There have been rare miracles of God's grace, wherein those, once in ignorance, mighty for evil, have become mighty for good; Saul became a Paul; Augustine the heretic, became S. Augustine, the mighty teacher of the Church unto this day, and till his Lord shall come.

Good natural dispositions *are* a great gift of God. They are the very substance, which God penetrates through and through with His grace; whereby He draws us to fuller grace; in which oftentimes He most shews forth His grace. But, in themselves, they become the occasion of evil.

It is one of the most wonderful condescensions of God, that He vouchsafes most often to adapt Him-

self, so to say, to His creatures. He does not, as we often do so roughly, force people along all in one way. He does not expect the same things from all. Those few chief great commands, which we cannot break, without doing violence to our moral natures, and inflicting a deadly wound on our souls, He *does* require of all. But He begins with us mostly in our own way. In our young years, He draws each of us with cords of love, by that which is tenderest, or gentlest, or most loving, or most noble in us. If we love what is beautiful, He sets before us the beauty of holiness, and the winningness of grace, and the loveliness of virtue, and He gives us some thrill of the piercing sweetness of His own love. Are we ambitious? How did our Lord, when in the Flesh, deal gently with His Apostles, who wished to sit on His Right Hand and His Left, and allow them to drink of His Cup and be baptized with His Baptism! They found His Cup a cup of sorrow, and His Baptism, a baptism of blood; but both were sweetened to them by His love. Are you ambitious now? He sets before you the only object of ambition. Not thrones, nor high station, nor wisdom, nor learning, nor a name among men, which can be gained by few, and which, to those few, are unsatisfying, but Himself, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, to be served with humble devoted service here, to be your own God for ever. Are we by nature tender and gentle? Natural tenderness and gentleness He strengthens and turns them into Christian self-denying, self-forgetful love for our neighbours. Do we love to be busy, active? He teaches us how to be active in His service. Are we by nature sad

and melancholy? He pronounces a blessing over those who mourn; He teaches us to mourn with others' sorrows and over our own sins, and makes the fellow-feeling with others' griefs a healing and hallowing of our own. Are we lively or sanguine? He hallows this natural temper and so uses it to carry us over trials, unbowed by disappointments, trustful in reverses, hopeful amid the loss of all things, unshaken, when all things tremble.

Nay, God turns by His grace what would become defects into graces. An obstinate temper becomes, by His grace, firm and unyielding to evil; a rigid temper, becomes strict with itself, and unbending in uprightness, a dull heavy temper He will transform into patient unworn endurance for love of Jesus. The sulky He can sweeten, so that they endure wrongs in stillness and silent forbearing love. The avaricious He can make thrifty of their own means, that they may minister to the wants of others; the profuse He can teach to give, "to their power, yea and beyond their power," and to learn self-denial and strictness, for the joy of liberality to Christ's poor members. Among the Cherubin which upbear His throne, He places the dull heavy Ox, as well as the fierce might of the Lion, and the Eagle of piercing sight and dauntless flight, with the prudence of the man, to shew that all powers of nature may do Him service, so that they bow themselves to His easy yoke.

See how He formed the saints of old. See how He trained, step by step, Abraham's implicit trust, until He led him to Mount Moriah, and Abraham withheld not from God his son, his only son, in whom

God's blessings for his seed and for himself lay, believing, what he had never seen or heard of, that God could restore, even on this earth, the dead to life; and God gave him to see the day of his Lord, and he saw it and was glad. How did Isaac's meek patience fit him to be a picture of his suffering Lord, as he willingly gave himself in faith, to be sacrificed! Joseph was strict with himself, and carried to his father the evil report of his brethren, which he could not endure, and had high thoughts of his future lot, which God foreshewed to him. How did God discipline him through his brethren's resentment, the false accusation of the wicked wife of Potiphar his master, and so raise him to the highest post of Egypt and make him a picture of his Lord, feeding with the bread of life, out of a royal bounty, his brethren who rejected and betrayed him! What fire of zeal was there in Moses' act, when he slew the Egyptian, thinking that the brethren would understand that God willed through him to redeem Israel! God accepted his zeal, after taming his strength for 40 years, keeping sheep in the wilds of Arabia, made him, when fourscore years old, the shepherd of His people, and delivered them through him, yet not by an arm of flesh, but by a staff of wood, the figure of the Cross, and with His own Right Hand, and outstretched Arm. Joshua was jealous for his master's honour, that none should prophesy, save those whom Moses had gathered and placed before the Lord. God, Who repressed his zeal then, chose him after 40 years, to be the captain of His host, to lead His people against His enemies. What a picture was David's youthful energy against

the lion and the bear, of the bold simple faith, with which he overcame the Philistine! Elijah, when he pleaded with God to take away his life, for in vain had he been very jealous for the Lord God of Israel, gives us a glimpse of the fervid natural mind, which God sanctified and ennobled to rebuke the cruel avarice of kings, and alone to withstand the sin of a whole hesitating people. Saul was, "after the strictest sect of his people, a Pharisee," for "[a] zeal, persecuting the Church." Fiery, earnest, determined, unwavering, he "[b] persecuted that way unto the death." Touched by one word of the Saviour, that giant might was fiery, all-enduring, unconquerable still. But this fire was to kindle, not to destroy. He burned with the love of Christ, flashed like lightning through the world, to bring to it the light of Christ. His strength was endurance of suffering through Christ sustaining him; his fire, a burning love for souls for which Christ died; his earnest will to know Christ only, and Him crucified. Our Lord Himself said to S. James and S. John, when *they* would have "called down fire from heaven, as Elias did," "[c] ye know not what manner of spirit *ye* are of." For Elijah did it at the secret command of God and in *his* act obeyed God; *they* would have had their Master sanction the indignant displeasure, with which their human feelings resented His wrong. The same fire burned in S. John through the whole life of man; yet it was the fiery glow of burning love, not now to destroy men's lives, but in his Master's Name and by the power of His Spirit, to save them.

[a] Phil. iii. 6. [b] Acts xxii. 4. [c] S. Luke ix. 55.

Such have been wonders of God's grace, my brethren. Like wonders of grace He has worked in countless souls, of whom the world knows nothing. The histories of Holy Scripture, whether it relate evil or good, are ensamples of us, what but for the grace of God, we should be, what through the grace of God we may become. God's grace still searches us out. It still seeks to find an entrance to us. It finds an entrance, in what way it can. It joins Itself to that in our natural selves, which It finds most kindred to It. Not that we have any good in us, which can deserve this grace. 'Paul had great merits, but they were evil.' But God's grace encircles, enfolds us, finds an opening to our hearts, where they are least closed. It seeks admission, if so be we will open to It. That entrance It finds mostly through that which is least spoiled, where God's Image is least marred in us. Nobleness or gentleness or equity or strictness or energy, unless they are penetrated by the grace of God, will always have some worm at the core, which will destroy their life and soundness in His sight. He appeals to us by that which, however defaced, still retains most likeness to Himself. He shews us glimpses of the real substance, of which we have some faint shadow. He appeals to us by the little which we know or grope after. 'You love beauty; the Essence of all Beauty is in Me. You would have what to love; I can teach you a higher, purer, deeper, more satisfying love than in your brightest imaginings ye can picture to yourselves. You love wisdom. In Me are all the treasures of true Wisdom. You would have earthly contentment; seek Me first, and I will give you all.

You would be great; I will give you the true nobleness, and make you kings and priests for ever.'

And so, as we yield to God's drawings, He draws us more and more into the inner circles of His Love. By one sin, Satan holds us bound; by one grace which we admit, God will make us free. For He binds us to Himself. One self-surrender to the grace of God, and the ray of His light is kindled in our souls, which will dispel all the remaining darkness; one taste is given of His sweetness, which will make all this world's bitter pleasures nauseate to us. The clouds of this world part before us; we behold some ray of the Divine light; and in that glimpse of heavenly things, we taste and know that the Lord is Good, and that His Goodness alone endureth, alone satisfieth, alone is true Goodness.

Watch, then, and be faithful to every drawing of the grace of God. But, very chiefly, be careful of any good thing, of which thou seest a faint likeness to be in thee. It were the deeper sin above all other sins to offend God, contrary to what God by the very voice of thy nature, has most taught thee. In this lies thy very deepest self. If we know not all our evil, at least we may know full easily, what is the best point in us. We love ourselves for it; we respect ourselves for it; perhaps we seek praise of others for it. Satan and our own vanity would make us reflect on it, speak of it, boast ourselves of it, that *we*, at least, have not the failing contrary to it. They would tempt us to count ourselves righteous for it, and despise others who have it not.

None of these things we must do, my brethren. But whatever good thing we by nature have, we

must thank God for it, as the special gift of God, It is painful to look to our faults and short-comings. This, at least, is an easy pleasant task, to look what good there is in us. I say not that we may dare to be indifferent whether in other things we displease God. But this is *one* most effectual way of learning how to please God, how to cease to displease Him. Be faithful to what thou seest and hearest, and God will teach thee what as yet thou knowest not. Be faithful to the grace which He gives thee, and He will give thee larger grace which shall pervade thy whole self. The good graft transforms into itself all the bitterness, coarseness, sourness of the parent stock. God Who by powers of nature transforms inanimate nature, much more will He, by His grace, if thou admit it, transform thee.

It is to unfold this good in thee, whatever it is, that God especially made thee. *This* good God wills to shine, penetrated by His grace, for ever. By this He wills that thou shouldest for ever glorify Him, and *be* to His Glory. This He willeth to be thine own special lustre, when all the righteous shall be arrayed with everlasting brightness from Himself. He willeth to make thy salvation easy to thee. He willeth to win thee to Himself by that side of thee, whereby thou mayest yield thyself most easily. These things, then, whatever they are, which thou doest most easily, seek, by His grace, to do *very* faithfully in order to please Him. Miss no opportunity of doing them. On no account, for no temptation, go contrary to these instincts of thy better nature. Be jealous over these, above every thing else in thee. Cultivate them by His grace; that

they may be fragrant, a sweet-smelling savour unto Him. Thank Him for His mercy, that He has willed to make some ways of pleasing Him so easy to thee. If He make thee gentle, miss no occasion to be *very* gentle; if He has made thee tender, miss no means of shewing tenderness; if readily obedient, be very careful to be *very* obedient in all things; if He has given thee purity of soul, see diligently, that not a breath fall upon it; if He has made thee merciful, be *very* diligent to shew mercy. On this account, it may be, He has made duty to our parents, "the first commandment with promise," because, since we are parts, so to say, of our parents, their very substance re-produced in us, this duty is, by the very power of our implanted natures, the easiest to us; this comes the earliest in our lives. By this He would give us, in our freshest, earliest days, the most frequent means of pleasing Him. He accompanies it with His blessing; so that, very rarely, if ever, has the dutiful child turned out a bad man.

And now that our yearly season of stricter discipline is coming round to us, it is well to set before us, one object, one special grace to attain, around which all our penitential exercises may roll, to advance which they may all tend. Every natural grace, as I said, through the corruption of our nature, has some evil quality lying close to it, which twines around it, feeds upon it, cramps its growth, and, if not corrected, stifles it and lives on its decay. Whatever thou hast, which thou thinkest the best thing in thee, cultivate *that* earnestly; but, to that end, see what briars and thorns choke it, what hinders the dew of God's grace from falling upon it, or His

Spirit from breathing on it, and so changing the fair show of nature into the perfect fruit of His grace.

In those very actions, in which thou pleasest thyself, until they are wholly filled with the grace of God, thou wilt find, if thou attendest to thyself and art true to thyself, something unsatisfactory, something which thou likest not to look at, from which thou turnest away or which thou passest quickly by. Or when thou wouldest do good in this special way, thou wilt find thyself hindered and turned aside; or thou wilt find some evil spring from this very thing in thee; as I said, as when one strict with himself becomes rigid and harsh, or when one of pliant temper falls in easily into wrong things, or cannot speak out for God, when it is right; or when one of easy kindly mind becomes easy with self, self-indulgent, or selfish; or when a loving mind craves for human sympathy and wastes in morbid thoughts of its fellow-creatures, the love which was meant, by the grace of God, to bear it upward to God.

If any have indeed any deadly sin, which has yet habitually the mastery over him, he has to look, not for growth but for life. God giveth him another season of penitence, that he may not be cut down. Yet even thus, God, not unseldom, gives vigorous grace in subduing deadly sin to the earnest purpose to do some other thing zealously for Him.

O that ye, my brethren, and all who are in sin, and all who are lukewarm and all who are faint-hearted, could but with steadfast thought set this before you, 'God the All-Wise, the All Good, made

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me for His endless glory. He made *me*, redeemed *me*, sanctified *me* in His love. In all eternity, before He created any thing, He saw us all in His Infinite mind, and so *me* too. For *me* He took Flesh on Him; for *me* He suffered; for *me* He died; for *me* He intercedeth at God's Right Hand; even now He looks on *me*, He gives *me* His Grace. And for what? That He might give me my own place among those who see Him, love Him, blessed in His blessed-making love for ever. For this He made me as I am; for this, whatever good there is in me, He, in His eternal love, willed to be in me. This He would perfect by His grace; for this He giveth me Himself; for this He speaks to my soul; for this He makes me His own; for this He feedeth me with His Body and Blood. O how should I not long to be what He in His Infinite Love willed to make me? How should I let this or that fault still hang round me and clog me? How can I sit so listless and be at so little pains with myself and waste myself in things of nought and emptiness and shame and misery, when the Good God made me thus, that He might take pleasure for ever in the good which He gave and cherished in me, and I might be such as may delight in and be filled with His love. Make me, O my God, *that* for which Thou didst make me and re-make me. Make me what Thou willest; only let me not fall short of that for which Thou didst make me.'

Hold fast to God in what way soever He draw thee; pray Him to hold thee faster to Him; be diligent, in no way, to let Him go; and He, Who gave thee grace, shall quicken thy sight that thou

mayest see, and enlarge thy heart that thou mayest love, whatever else He, in His everlasting love for thy soul, desireth from thee. '[d] He shall lead thee by His counsel and after that, receive thee to glory;' to which He of His Infinite Mercy bring us all, through the merits of our Redeemer Jesus Christ.

[d] Ps. lxxiii. 24.

SERMON VII.

LUKEWARMNESS.

Rev. iii. 14—16.

"*These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.*"

What words out of the mouth of the Truth, my brethren! Our Lord knew that they would seem hard words, that they would be hard for us to receive, that they would fall very hardly and heavily upon some, who thought that all things were well with them, that they were 'rich' in Divine gifts, 'increased with goods,' good deeds which they thought they had in good store, 'and had need of nothing:' no fresh supplies of grace, no more earnest exertion, no deeper love, no further conquest over self. What our Lord says, seems almost against our natural instinct. The 'hot,' of whom He speaks, are those who have the glow of Divine love, who are fervent in spirit, kindled with holy longings; who burn with

the desire to serve God devotedly, to please Him with their whole heart, to be all which God wishes, to be, by the grace of God, that wherein He might be well pleased.

The 'cold' are plainly the very opposite to all this. They are those who know nothing of the love of God, who are altogether far from God, the sun of our life, the life of our souls; they are without the grace of God, and so they are plunged in sin and are the slaves of sin. The 'lukewarm' lie, in one sense, between these two. They would neither be altogether the one, nor wholly the other. They cannot endure the cost of being God's; they fear, wilfully and with full knowledge to offend Him. They are not bold enough, so to say, to choose wholly good or wholly evil. They *will* not choose God or Baal. They would serve, at once, God and mammon; God, as far as they think they *must*, and mammon, as far as they think they *may*, and yet escape hell. And so they shew that their real love is for mammon. What service they shew to God is the service of fear; the service of mammon is their service of love. For fear only constrains them to serve God thus much; fear only restrains them from serving themselves, their passions, their desires, their pride, their sins of flesh and spirit, more.

Still, although this is true, they do not own this to themselves. They are outwardly decent, it may be; perhaps they are thought well of; they allow themselves in no flagrant disgraceful sins; they "[a] thank God that they are not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this pub-

[a] S. Luke xviii. 11.

lican." They go to Church, if it costs them nothing, as the Pharisee went to the temple. They do not aim at great holiness, height of perfection, close nearness to God. But they are free from open irregularities; they say their prayers in a way; they are respectful to Almighty God. Their own conscience accuses them not; the grievous sins of others from which they are free, seem to excuse them; men speak well of them; Why should not God?

It does seem to us a hard judgement, my brethren, that some who seem to have so much good in them, many good natural qualities, should be set down as being in a worse, more dangerous, more hopeless state than others who habitually by flagrant offences break the law of God.

And therefore, because it is so, our Lord enforces it in a solemn way, which He had not used towards the Bishops of the other Churches, whom in the beginning of the Revelations, He reproves, warns, exhorts, encourages. "These things," saith "the Amen," the True, He Who Alone is True, the God of truth, "the faithful and true Witness" Who witnesseth that which He knows, "the beginning of the creation of God;" in Whom we are all new-created, from Whom and in Whom we have our new birth, our new being in God, and Who knows whereon hangs the life of our souls, which, if they are alive, is in Him and from Him. What is it then, Lord, which Thou sayest so earnestly? "Would that thou wert either cold or hot." He saith not, that, *in itself* "coldness" is not more offensive to God than "lukewarmness;" or in other words, that one who openly, knowingly, flagrantly, breaks God's

commandments is not a greater sinner in God's sight than one who is just outwardly decent. Sin is so great an evil, it works such ruin to the soul, it so dishonours God, and mars His creation, that it is a great gain when one sin is spared. But our Lord means, Neither of the two are in a state of grace; both are out of the favour of God; neither, *as they are*, can enter His kingdom or attain to Heaven; but there is more hope that the "cold," i.e. one openly far from God, may repent, and turn to Him and be saved, than the "lukewarm," i.e. one who does not openly part with God, and yet in his inward heart, loves Him not.

What then is this lukewarmness, my brethen? why is it so perilous? how may we avoid or escape from it?

Lukewarmness is a relaxed state of the soul, in which the soul does as little for God as it *can*, and pleases itself as much as it *dares*. It asks not, 'Will this please or displease God?' but 'Will God indeed punish me for this? Will He cast me into Hell for this?' It goes as near to the borders of sin as it dares; it indulges itself in all which it can persuade itself not to be sin. When checked, it is checked, not by love, but by fear. It justifies to itself all which it any how can; it renounces nothing which it can make out to itself not to be deadly sin. Its very purpose and aim is to enjoy as much as it can, to do nothing which costs it any thing. It despises every duty which it can imagine not to be essential; it indulges every inclination which it can imagine not to be damning. It frames maxims to itself, or adopts those around it, which can make its way as

broad as it can, and yet hide from its eyes, that it is "[b] the way which leadeth to destruction."

But why is it so perilous? You allow, you may say to me, 'that if the lukewarm sees a duty to be essential, he will seek to do it; that if he sees a thing to be deadly sin, he will hold back from it.' True, my brethren, so long as it remains mere lukewarmness. But lukewarmness has perils of its own; it has the further peril, the peril of despised grace, the peril of wilful blindness, the peril that the light which it shuts out, shall be withdrawn, and the soul left in entire darkness.

But its special peril is this; the soul thinks that it sees, and yet is blind; it is acting against God's grace, and yet thinks that it is in the grace of God; it is living without the love of God, and yet misses it not; its whole course is against the laws, the power, the holiness, the end, the essence of the Gospel, and it knows it not. A soul in deadly sin may know that it is in sin, and although weak and powerless and enslaved, may hate itself and its chains, and pray for deliverance. The very galling of its bonds may wring from it its cry for its Saviour? But a soul which is satisfied with itself, which applauds itself, which looks on all aims at holiness above itself, as superfluous or a phantom, wherewith should it be awakened?

And yet the very principle of the lukewarm is a denial of the truth of the Gospel.

What is the very essence of our duty to God under the Gospel? "[c] We love God because He first loved us." And what is the very essence of love?

[b] S. Matt. vii. 13. [c] 1 S. John iv. 19.

to love as one's self, more than one's self; to have one mind, one soul, as it were; so that what the one loves, the other loves; what the one hates, the other hates. What is the measure of the love of God, but to love without measure? What is the greatest joy, the greatest pain of one who loves? To please or to displease whom it loves. What is the greatest longing, the greatest fear of one who loves? To be one with, or to lose whom it loves.

And where then is any trace of love in the lukewarm? What is the object, the centre, the rule, the hope, the fear of the lukewarm? Its all rolls around itself. Why does such an one abstain from some sin, to which corrupt nature is inclined? For fear of some bad consequence to itself. Why does he dread reproaches of conscience? Because he fears that what he must condemn, God will much more condemn, and punish him in hell. Why does he pray? Because he is afraid not to pray; and the happiest moment of his prayer, is when it is done; his task is over, his conscience is satisfied, and he is free. Why then does he give alms? Because hell is threatened to the unmerciful. What is his measure of right or wrong? His hope of escaping with impunity. What is his guide, in any case which to him yet seems doubtful? That same question whereby the Evil one deceived Eve; Hath God indeed said, Thou shalt not? Then, if (which is impossible) God could relax His own laws, suspend His punishments, overlook deadly sin, as He does our infirmities, and form a heaven for those whom He has said He will cast into hell, the impure, the proud, the unforgiving, the drunken, the revellers, the liars,

the covetous, the malicious, the unmerciful, what should hinder them from becoming any of these? At once, they would not openly become any of these. It would destroy their self-respect, their self-made peace, their imagined goodness, the building of lies, under which they rest securely. But whichever of these they are tempted to become, *that* they are, in what degree they dare. They are not tempted to all, and they make much of themselves, for being free from whatever they are not inclined to. Their very code of morality, is to keep themselves from any great outbreaks; and on that ground they can 'justify themselves and despise others.' But how is the heart, which God searcheth? Their heart runs the more wild and is overgrown the more with the briars and thorns of sins, because they attend only or chiefly to outward proprieties. They indulge inward thought the more securely, because they are grave, sedate, even, in their outward life. Why? Because they desire not the grace of God, nor the love of God, nor to partake of the holiness of God. They desire only to be without fear, to have as much of this world as they can, without incurring to such a degree, God's displeasure, that they shall perish everlastingly. And so they blind themselves, and God lets them be blinded. Their whole life is a continual dislike to, refusal of, grace. They dislike the grace of God, because it puts them upon doing something which costs them toil, it disturbs their sloth, it will not leave them at ease. They uniformly, in the end, refuse grace, pleased perhaps with having felt the emotion of grace, and hoping that they are in the grace of God, on the very ground

that they have felt it, although they ended in refusing it. For if they refused not grace, they could not continue lukewarm. And each refusal of grace dulls the conscience, obscures the soul's light, increases darkness, entangles the understanding, weakens the will, strengthens the passions, confirms the listlessness of the soul. Each refusal of grace hardens the soul from good, prepares it for future evil, and narrows the space between it, and the evil which it once abhorred and from which it thought itself so safe. What are they, then, in heart already? Where *can* the heart be, which is ever tampering with the law of God, ever hesitating about grace, ever bargaining with God, that He should allow it so much of what is, in fact, sin, if only it keeps clear of so much more; ever reserving to itself what it likes, although it knows that God mislikes it; ever heaping to itself as much, and leaving to God as little, as it dares?

"[d]Love is strong as death." It slays in us what we have been, that it may make us what we were not. Death mastereth all things besides, and is mastered by love. How then can love be in a thing so weak, so nerveless, so powerless, as the lukewarm mind?

Love ever worketh, for "[e]faith worketh by love;" lukewarmness is sluggish to all good. Love counteth all heavy things light for Him Whom it loves. Lukewarmness counteth all light labour a burden. Love is jealous for the glory of Him Whom it loves. Lukewarmness holds cheap the Glory of God, so that He punish it not. Love "[f]seeketh not her own;" lukewarmness seeketh nothing but her own. "[g]Love is the fulfilment of the law;" lukewarm-

[d] Cant. viii. 6. [e] Gal. v. 6. [f] 1 Cor. xiii. 5. [g] Rom. xiii. 10.

ness looks into the law of God, only to see what it need not fulfil. Love "[h]is the bond of perfectness." Lukewarmness studieth only to remain imperfect. "[i] Love casteth out" slavish "fear;" lukewarmness is held in any check by nothing but slavish fear. Love stretcheth forth continually towards its God, in love, in prayer, in longing, in self-sacrifice, in hope, in contemplation, in union. Lukewarmness holdeth back, shrinketh away from God, and if she knew herself, would that there were no God at all, so that there were none to punish her.

And therefore lukewarmness is contrary to the very end of our creation. God created all things to be perfected after their kind, man to be perfected in His own image, in His love. For this, the Father gave His Son to die for us; for this, He gave His Holy Spirit to draw us by His grace. He made each one of us to be perfected in his own way; not one to have the perfection of the other, but each to be perfected according to that eternal purpose of love which He purposed for us. To this we are bound as Christians, "[k]Be ye perfect," saith our Lord, "as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." If we would be, and be accounted sons and heirs of so great a Father, we must not be degenerate sons; we must aim to be like "our Father." If we would be Christ's, we must labour to be conformed to the image of Christ, in which we were new-created. If we would have the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, we must mortify, do to death, the deeds of the flesh, combat the flesh in order to subdue it to the Spirit, lay aside the old man, in order to be clothed with

[h] Col. iii. 14. [i] 1 S. John iv. 18. [k] S. Matt. v. 48.

the new, press on to the mark of our high calling in Jesus Christ. The lukewarm would have none of this; they *will* deliberately to stay as they are; they think that they are well enough; they wish not to decline, but they would not have the toil of advancing; they think that higher degrees of holiness are for the Clergy, for instance, for those whose business and profession it is, or for those who make professions, as though we had not, all, in our Baptism made our profession, 'to follow the example of our Saviour Christ and to be made like unto Him; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptised, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.' As though the son who said to his father, "[l] I go, sir, and went not," would be owned as his son; as though our Lord would, in the Great Day, own those whom He hath said that He will not own, "[m] who say, Lord Lord, and do not the things which" He says. As though one who neglected the drawings of God's Holy Spirit, who made it his very plan and system not to be moved, not to be stirred, not to be roused to any greater measure of duty, or to be disturbed in any pleasure, or gain, or vanity, which he could justify to himself by any false maxims of this world, could retain the Spirit of God, to which he did despite. Yet "[n] if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

This is the whole *source* of evil to the soul; yet it goes on to other evil. The soul which will not

[l] S. Matt. xxi. 30. [m] S. Luke vi. 46. [n] Rom. viii. 9.

obey grace, cannot retain grace; and he who retains not grace, must sink steadily into a worse state than before. For, of ourselves, our nature, unless upheld by grace, ever tends downwards. Every thing is advancing or retreating, growing or decaying. When our bodies cease to gain strength, they begin to lose it; when our souls cease to stretch onward, they sink back. Nothing continueth at one stay. "[o] Run," the Apostle saith, "that ye may obtain." It is an idle wish, to will to stay as you were yesterday or the day before. Grace has either been used or refused, and you are nearer to or more removed from God. The motion may be slow either way, as you see not the hour-hands move, nor, day by day, do you see the days lengthen or shorten. But sooner might the sun stand still in its course, or the circuit of the year, or the growth or decay of nature, or the pulse of your bodies and the beatings of your heart, than the soul stand still a single day. But if it have begun to fall, where will the end be? God only knoweth. There are, who continue all their lives long in this drowsy state; as age comes on, they grow duller and duller in all thoughts of God, and die, as they lived, stupified, without any feeling for God, or thought of Heaven, save as a place where they may escape from Hell.

They are not warm emotions which God asks of you, not strong feelings, nor even, at once, fervent love. These, when they are true, are the Gift of God. But He asks of you your wills; He asks of you what He will give you, a steadfast undivided will, to do His will, to obey Him, to be what He

[o] 1 Cor. ix. 24.

wills, with singleness of heart to choose what He chooses, refuse what He forbids.

Would any of you, then, shake off this numbness, which keeps your soul imprisoned, holds you back from free service of God, and keeps you far from God and Heaven? Do this one thing. I will not set before you a hard thing.

Think, if but for a few moments, day by day, of the end of all things, when all things which you now have, covet, employ yourself about, shall be gone for ever, and thou shalt stand, bared of all, at the Judgement seat of Christ. Thou canst picture to thyself, thy Lord sitting in Majesty, and thyself before Him, as thou shalt stand face to face, eye to eye. Thou wilt see then the Wounds which He bore for thee, the Side which was pierced for thee, the Head which was crowned with the thorns of thy sins. Set this before thee now; think of His sentence on the slothful servant, on the weeping and gnashing of teeth; and think, on the other hand of the eternity of peace, the fulness of joy, the abundance of love, the tender love of This All-mighty, All-loving Saviour, and think, for that day, of some one thing which thou mayest do for love of Him.

O if they who forget God could but know for one day, for one hour, I might say, for one act, the joy of doing with your whole heart something for the love of Jesus! O if you could know the joy of giving yourself with unreserved heart to live to *Him*, Who, for love of you, gave His life; to live to *Him* Who will give you everlasting life.

Yet at least think not of yourself, what S. Paul thought not of himself, that you have attained;

think not that you are rich enough for you in the favour of God; for so assuredly, you would be poor, and naked of the robe of righteousness; and blind, not knowing your poverty or blindness or nakedness or misery; but buy of Him "[p] gold tried in the fire," i.e. pure kindled love, freed from all dross of hypocrisy and self-seeking; and white raiment, given thee by Christ, of holiness and purity and innocence, and anoint thine eye that thou mayest see thine own poverty and the richness of the goodness of God.

And wherewith shalt thou buy it? Buy it by pleading to Him the Blood of Christ, which He has given thee as thy ransom; buy it by longing from Him, Who is ever more ready to give than we to pray; buy larger grace by using through His grace, the grace He giveth; buy it by owning thine own poverty, and blindness and misery, and He will give thee the true riches, even the fulness of His love and the boundlessness of His joy, and that for evermore.

[p] Rev. iii. 18.

SERMON VIII.

LOSS THROUGH LITTLE SINS[a].

1 Cor. iii. 11—13.

"*Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*"

The "Day" of which S. Paul here speaks, is "the Day of Judgement." It is in Holy Scripture called the Day of the Lord[b], the Day of God[c], the Day of Jesus Christ[d], the last Day[e], the Great Day[f], the Great and Terrible Day[g]. But it is also called, as here, "the Day." S. Paul says, "[h]He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him, against That Day." He speaks of "[i]the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give to me at that Day." He prays for Onesiphorus, "[j]The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that Day."

It is God's Day as opposed to man's day; God's

[a] See further, Lenten Sermons, 'Losses of the saved.' p. 89 sqq.
[b] 2 S. Pet. iii. 10. [c] Ib. 12. [d] Phil. i. 6. [e] S. John xii. 48.
[f] Jude 6. [g] Joel ii. 31. [h] 2 Tim. i. 12. [i] Ib. iv. 8. [j] Ib. i. 18.

judgement as opposed to man's judgement. It is *the* Day, because it closes up all which was before, it opens all which comes after; it closes this life of trial; it opens the life of everlasting rest and peace; it closes time and change and suffering; it opens an eternity of joy to those who love God. It is "the Day," on which hangs eternity, and our eternal doom. In that Day the fire shall burn up this our earth, as it is said, "[k] the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance of them that know not God;" we are bidden to look for and haste "[l] unto the coming of the Day of God, when the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" and "we look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

In this Day, then, "the Day of Judgement," S. Paul says, that, as in a searching fire, "every man's work shall be made manifest;" and not only the whole man, nor his works good or bad, as a whole, shall be tried; whether he shall be placed on the right hand or on the left, among the sheep or the goats, the lost or the saved: but there shall be a special, very searching, examination into the works even of those who shall be saved. It is well, my brethren, that we should think thus vividly of the Day of Judgement, because God has set it before our eyes. He has told us elsewhere, that we shall be "[m] judged according to our works," that "[n] God will bring every secret thing into judgement, whether it be good or bad." He has told us, in the parable of the slothful servant, how neglect of His grace shall

[k] 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. [l] 2 S. Pet. iii. 12, 13.
[m] Rev. xx. 13. [n] Eccl. xii. 14.

be punished; in the unforgiving servant, that they who forgive not will not be forgiven; in the rich man and Lazarus, He has told us the blessings of patient endurance, the curse of self-indulgence which forgets the care of the poor and sick. In the account of the sheep and goats, He has set before us the value of every deed of love in that Day. As elsewhere He has told us in plain words, what sins will wholly shut out from Heaven those who do them, and who have not, with their whole hearts, repented of them, and turned to Him.

But here God tells us of one class of acts, done by those who shall yet be saved, but which shall bring with them great loss and suffering in that day. In part, indeed he is speaking of us, as the ministers of God. He himself, as by the grace of God a wise master-builder, had laid the foundation, and "[o]others builded thereupon. But let every one take heed how he buildeth thereupon." All who have been sent as labourers, to build up or edify Christians, being called thereto inwardly by His Spirit, and outwardly by those who have authority in His Church, are such builders. But we have each a nearer temple to build for God, where He is pleased to dwell, if we love Him,—our own souls. And here S. Paul speaks of both; how, upon the One Foundation which is Christ, we, whether Ministers or people, must be careful how we build; we His Ministers, in our teaching and life according to His Will; you, my brethren, by building up your own souls through a life according to that teaching by the grace of Christ.

To you, my brethren, I will speak not of what con-

[o] 1 Cor. iii. 10.

cerns *our* office, but of what concerns both our souls in common. S. Paul then, in this wider sense, speaks of our life as a building, which Christians build upon the One Foundation which is Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." So our Lord speaks of the man who heareth His words and doeth them, as building his house upon a rock; the man, who heareth them and doeth them not, as building his house upon the sand. On this Foundation, then, which is Christ, men build up different sorts of doings, which are pictured by different materials. "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." If a fire were kindled around a house built of gold, silver, or precious stones, however large and fierce the fire might be, the house would stand; the fire would curl around it, unharming, and the rich colour of the gold, the pure white of the silver, the lustre which flashes from the precious stones, would gleam forth with the intenser beauty, as they shone and cast back upon the eye the pure bright glowing light, which streamed around them. So then is it as to good deeds, done by the grace of Christ, for the love of God and praise of God, because God has loved the soul, and the soul which God has loved, puts forth in deeds the love, which it hath from Him. The real beauty of good works, done by the grace of Christ working in us, will then be seen in the bright fire of the great Day. Then shall be seen the true loveliness of pure humility, the beauty of unspotted purity, of glowing love, of yearning tenderness, of gentle meek-

ness, of faith immoveable, of self-forgetting goodness, of devotion which ever arose to God, seeking from God nothing but Himself. Those who love God forget their own good deeds; but while they knew not of it, thought not of themselves, save to humble themselves, each act done for the love of God, is a stone in that building which the searching fire of the Judgement Day shall not touch, but shall only shew before men and Angels the lustre of its purity and beauty and brightness through the glow of the grace of Christ which filled and ensouled it. Nothing shall be forgotten there. As these our buildings rise, stone by stone, on their foundation, so each act which, from the first childish self-denial, or obedience, or prayer, until the soul of the aged man commends itself to its Saviour's love, is, through the grace of Christ, done according to the Will of God, is stored by God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Beautiful shall it be, because there is no beauty like the beauty of the grace of Christ, which is the life of the Christian soul, the brightness of each Christian deed.

As we admit into our souls more or less of that grace, the works done through that grace are more or less precious in the eyes of God. We shall have more or less reward from God, because we shall have more or less power or capacity to receive the love of God, and to behold God. And this is shadowed out by those different substances, gold, silver, precious stones, all good, solid, bright, glorious, but the glory of the one is greater than the glory of the other. So shall it be in the Resurrection. As we are faithful to the grace of God here, as we seek here to love

God with all our hearts and minds and soul and strength and our neighbour as ourselves, and as we act, think and speak in that love, and shut out from our souls what is against that love, so shall the love of God be in that Day, our Reward, our Glory, and our Joy.

But what then does the Apostle mean by those other words, "wood, hay, stubble?" You know well, what would become of a house of wood, or of a rick, if fire was kindled around it, on however good and solid a foundation of stone it might be raised. The foundation upon which it was built would not save it. So then there are works, done by those who do not yet forsake Christ, which shall not stand in the fire of the Great Day. What are they then? Are they great, deadly sins, such as the Apostle elsewhere speaks of, "[p] Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, hatred, drunkenness, revelling, and such like?" No, my brethren. Such works as those are not and cannot be built upon the Foundation; they, as far as in us lies, destroy the Foundation, and the soul itself. They take away the soul from Christ; they cause Christ to remove His Presence from the soul. They are rather pictured in Holy Scripture by brass, and iron, tin and lead, heavy, dull, worthless materials, which cannot be cleansed, but remain in the fire, unconsumed but unpurified[q]. They who do these things, do not build upon '[r] the Rock which is Christ; they "[s] build their house on the sand; and the ruin of that house," our Lord says, "is great." But what

[p] Gal. v. 19, 20.

[q] Jer. vi. 29. Ezek. xxii. 18, 20. S. Aug. Ench. c. 68. S. Ambr. in Ps. cxviii. Serm. 20, n. 13. [r] 1Cor. x. 4. [s] S. Matt. vii. 27.

then are these other buildings? what becomes of them? or of those, whose works they are? S. Paul goes on, "[t] If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire," i.e. the works themselves shall utterly perish; they shall have no reward; they shall be proved to be worthless, and worse than worthless; they shall bring loss and suffering upon him who doth them; and he himself shall be saved, hardly, scarcely, with suffering, as one whose house is on fire around and over him, and he escapes from it for his life, scorched, dizzied, wounded, but—saved.

What then are these things, done by a Christian, one not only born of Christian parents and baptized into Christ, but still united with Christ by faith and love and His Indwelling Spirit, and building upon Christ as the Foundation, one who leaves this life in a state of grace, reconciled with God and "saved," and yet these things bring upon him such great and terrible loss for eternity, loss of the reward which he might have had, and such near and exceeding peril? They are not, as you know, *great* sins; since great sins reject Christ and separate from Christ. What then remains, but that they are heaps of little sins; little self-indulgences against the law and will and mind of God, which do not extinguish the love of God in the heart, yet chill it exceedingly; little vanities; little envies; little self-seekings or selfishnesses; little detractions of a neighbour; little unseriousnesses; little contemptuousnesses; idle imaginings;

[t] 1 Cor. iii. 14, 15.

petty angers; little deceitfulnesses or self-praise? Sins they are, of which people make very little, because, one by one they think them little sins; but which, weighed together, become very heavy.

Now there is a separate danger as to all little sins, that little sins, like little children, grow, till they are no longer little, but strong, thickset, and if uncontrolled and unsubdued when little, ungovernable. But this is not what the Apostle is here speaking of. Of this, if God will, I will speak to you hereafter. Here the Apostle is speaking of little sins, which remain little during this life, which do not grow into great sins, through which a man does not lose Heaven, yet for which he who does them, shall still suffer loss and pain in the Day of Judgement.

But how, you will ask, can this be? Who can be without little sins or infirmities? Truly, no one. For the beloved Apostle says; "[u] If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" and Solomon says in his prayer to God, "[x] there is no man which sinneth not;" and S. James, "[y] in many things we all offend;" and our Lord teaches all to pray daily "forgive us our trespasses." And this He would not have done, had we not all daily something, for which to ask forgiveness.

True it is, there still remains even in those who are reborn of God, and live to God, that inward corruption, although weakened by Baptismal grace, which still wars against the mind. Through the pressure of this continual war it was, that the Apostle cried in the name of us all, but for himself also,

[u] 1 S. John i. 8. [x] 2 Chron. vi. 36.
[y] S. James iii. 2.

"[z] wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" For death alone shall, through the mercy of God, put an end to all our distempers, and be the healing of all our defilements; then we shall put off with this flesh all the desires of the flesh, to receive our bodies again, glorious, pure, incorruptible, incapable of suffering, or passion or sin.

Since then all have these lesser sins, who are they who are building on Christ the Foundation, "gold, silver, precious stones," and who "build wood, hay, stubble?" All have these lesser sins, but all have them not equally; all fail, but all do not equally fail; all fail, but all do not fail in all ways or in most ways; all fail, but some never fail deliberately, or consciously, or with full knowledge that they are doing wrong, even in the very least thing; all fail, but some wholly yielding always, others always resisting; some habitually, others rarely and through sudden surprise; some mastering themselves more and more, others being more and more enslaved; some taking such faults as a matter of course and holding them cheap; others sorrowing at once for love of God that they had in the least thing done other than He willed, and gaining through His mercy, even more through their sorrow and greater watchfulness afterwards, than they had lost through their failing.

They, then, are building the gold, silver, precious stones on Christ, "the sure Foundation," who resting on Him in faith and love, seek so to walk as Christ walked, to live after His Pattern, to do and

[z] Rom. vii. 24.

be what He loves, to avoid what is not after the mind of Christ. They build walls fitting for that Precious Foundation, who, by His grace, rear up in themselves a temple of God for the indwelling of His Spirit, reflecting in their souls the light of God, gleaming with His grace, glowing with His warmth, kindled by His Spirit, admitting into their whole minds His searching light, the glow of His love into their whole hearts. They build that which shall not pass away, who cling to God, with the full desire of their hearts; by His grace keep His commandments, use this world as not abusing it; and fixing their souls and their affections on that which is abiding, heavenly, Divine, eternal, themselves abide in Him Who abideth for ever.

If you spoke of an earthly building, you would say that it is built of that whereof it is *chiefly* built. So men are building upon Christ, whose firm purpose and desire of their soul is to please Him, who keep their souls awake and alive to what would displease Him, who would start back at the very slightest doubt, 'Is this displeasing to Christ?' These, though they cannot be exempt from all lesser sin, yet may by His grace keep themselves wholly from some; others they may be subduing more diligently, and dread more than Hell itself, the thought of knowingly in the very least things offending God.

They on the contrary, even if by God's mercy, they be saved at last, are treasuring to themselves suffering against the Day of Judgement, are gathering to themselves a never-ending loss, who, while they keep themselves from very deadly sins, yet are heedless and indifferent as to the lesser. These encase

and encrust the soul, as it were, with habits of mind, in thought word and deed, with which they cannot enter heaven. In heaven, there can be none the slightest thought of vain-glory; no petty repugnance, or mislike of one another; no suspicion; no comparison of ourselves with others; no discontent; no repining; no thought that we are not cared for enough or loved enough; no grudge; no remembrance of unkindness. My brethren, if all these things must be left and laid aside at the very portals of heaven; if none of these things can stand the fire of the Day of Judgement; if the slightest feeling of unlove would be a dark spot, seen through the whole brilliancy of heaven and unbearable in its transparent purity and brightness; what are any of us doing, if we are not using our utmost strength, all the power of our souls to lay them aside now?

What should you think of the love of husband or wife, or child, who professed themselves ready on any one great occasion to do what you wished, or not to do what you wished not, but who in all little things, were wholly thoughtless of you, who never studied your wishes, never cared whether they went against you, but were wholly bent on pleasing themselves and wholly forgot and were regardless of you? It is the beauty of deep love, that it counts nothing little, whereby it may please whom it loves. It longs to be worthy of it, to be wholly one with it, to know what will please it; it studies its mind, thoughts, feelings, tastes, in order to conform itself wholly to them. And why? Because love loves the whole being, and would not in any thing be separate from that which it loves.

But we, my brethren, what do we love? Who is the Object of our love? I dare not even ask you, whether there be any thing in Him, not Perfect, not Good, not Lovely, not worthy of all the love of all created things? And what hath He not done for us to make us love Him? Would it not be perfection of bliss to be any way like Him? Is it not the greatest misery of all miseries to be so unlike Him?

And what must it not be, then, in the Day of Judgement, if by His Mercy we are saved, to find that we have been all our lives long, cherishing in ourselves things which hindered us from the fulness of His love, that we had been toiling for a wrong reward; that what we have sought with so much diligence has perished, that our being, here, has been one great mistake, that we have sought for things that we should have left and must leave, and have missed what we should have sought, whatever should have gained for us the larger power of loving God? What would it be then to discover, that some one thing in which we had all our life long indulged, some love of praise, some undue desire to be loved or to be admired, some straining to out-do others, some petty haughtiness or contempt, some self-love or resentment, some wrong indulgence of the body, pleasant as it had been to us at the time, was that wood, hay, stubble, a thing dry, empty of the grace of God, emptying us so far of that grace, perishing itself, a loss irreparable?

For though we be saved, there is no growth in grace there. We shall be judged from the deeds "[a] done in the body." God will reward every man[b]

[a] 2 Cor. v. 10. [b] Ib.

according to the things which he hath done, whether they be good or bad. "[c] There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Wherein thou failest now, thou failest for eternity. Thou canst not, *then*, build what thou neglectest now. "[d] Star differeth from star in glory."

There will be around and in the Divine Presence countless multitudes, in different degrees of nearness, knowledge, love, bliss. When thou partest from this life, thy place, for weal or woe, or the degree of either, will be fixed. There is no change there. If through faith and love and repentance thou be found united to Christ, thou wilt be saved. But if through love of these passing things, even while not letting go of the love of Christ, thou hast allowed thy soul to be stained with multitudes of little sins; if by likings for things which God loves not, thou hast chilled thy love to God; if by permitting lukewarmness to creep over thee, thou hast numbed and weakened thy strength in serving God, thou canst not do then, what thou failest to do now.

It will be an aweful Day, my brethren, even to such of us as are saved. I do not mean now, that we shall then see how near we may have been, when in our sins, to the pit of Hell; how nearly they had exhausted the Mercy of God; how deep and black an offence this or that deeper sin was in the Eyes of God. But I mean that it will be an aweful piercing thought then, to see our whole past lives before us, how little of them was given to God, how much to ourselves; how little we retained, how much

[c] Eccl. ix. 10. [d] 1 Cor. xv. 41.

more we had lost, and that, of the Infinite Love of God.

It cannot be otherwise. There will be different mansions in Heaven. Our Lord tells us, "[e] In My Father's house are many mansions." In all, all will be perfectly happy. All shall know then that the very lowest place is above their deserts; all shall wonder that they are not lower, even if they wonder not that they are there at all; all shall be happy, because all shall be full, as they are able to contain it, full of the Infinite Love of God.

But think, my brethren, think, even if by God's mercy, ye are saved, think of that hour. Think of the books being opened. Think of your consciences being laid open before you; think of every thought, word, deed in your whole lives, minute after minute, in every year, month, day, of your lives, being unfolded to you; sins which you never saw; sins to which you blinded yourselves, so that you could not see them; sins which you thought lightly of, because so many besides you did them, or because you were accustomed to them, or because you liked them, or perhaps they seemed to give you what you wished for; and then to see how, in wasting the grace of God, you had wasted Eternal Love, Eternal Beauty, Eternal Glory, Eternal Bliss, and that irreparably.

Truly, in that Day, the sword shall pierce through the soul. The intense pang of beholding in that Day, how we have wasted the love of Jesus, how we have neglected His grace, cast aside His gifts, been deaf to His calls, sluggish to the good motions of His Spirit, grudging in our obedience, what we might

[e] S. John xiv. 2.

have been, had we used all that grace, and what we are, may be God's instrument to our souls, the last anguish which shall sever from us all our dross, and leave our souls fixed eternally in His Love. It is an aweful thought, above all awe, which can befall the saved. As then you would not in that Day, my brethren, see your works burned up, and yourselves, if saved, saved so as by fire; as ye would not that the fire of that Great Day should scorch you, and ye scarcely escape; as ye would not then learn too late, that you had lost irrecoverably treasures of the love of God and of eternal Bliss, sift your hearts now, that ye be not building dry works of straw which shall be burned up, for works of the gold of the love of God which shall abide; so when it next occurs to you, in temptation, 'this is but a slight thing,' 'God will not *much* heed this,' look at the hand-writing of the Day of Judgement; look at it by the light of that terrible fire which shall burn up all, not done in the love of God, and say with the whole might of thy soul, 'By the grace of God, not for the whole world, would I do the very least thing, which shall displease my Saviour and my God.'

SERMON IX.

PERIL OF LITTLE SINS.

Ecclus. xix. 1.

"*He that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little.*"

We see this to be true in the things of this world. In a man's goods, our proverbs tell us that, if little sums are taken care of, we need not fear for the greater. In the clothes which we wear, in the houses we dwell in, those same proverbs tell us, how timely care will save a larger rent.

Those who have care of the body, know that little neglects at first bring on great diseases for which there is no cure. What a little thing is a spark! The naked foot can stamp it out, and feel no pain. Let it fall and smoulder on unheeded, whole houses and cities will be consumed in one vast overthrow. You have seen how fiercely the fire will dart, putting itself forth as with living fury, to find something to devour. Who would imagine to himself in that wild raging fierceness, the little harmless-looking spark, which the mere touch of a finger would put out? One little spark has often caught a fine dress; a few seconds more, and if it be not smothered, nothing remains but at the longest a lingering tor-

turing death. What slighter and finer than the thin edge of a wedge? Let it have room, and what oak will it not break in pieces? What softer than a drop of water? As it falls against the hard stone, it parts asunder, soon disappears, and the stone seems, as it was before. Yet our proverb again tells us, 'continual droppings wear away stones.' The knee of a man is soft and easily hurt. The knees of men have worn holes in the hard stone.

Since this is so in things of nature, our estates, our bodies, why should it not be so as to our souls? Those outward things are mostly pictures of something in our souls. Through things which concern our bodies or estates, things which we see, about which the most thoughtless are more or less concerned and feel, God would impress upon our souls, what concerns them, and our never-ending being.

God has stamped upon His creation, this great law. He repeats it in the order of His providence; that we may have it before our eyes, and know and feel and believe it as to our souls. That law is, 'things of little account, if neglected, become of great account.' Stop beginnings, if you would stop short of the end. As you would know that one who was continually saying as to his money, 'it's only this,' 'it's only that,' would soon fall into difficulties, and waste his substance, and might come, even if very rich, to poverty, so see that you do not waste, in little things, the grace of God. As you would not walk in a slippery place, which in one steady smooth descent slided down to a precipice, so do not walk fearlessly amid little sins. They are, if you abide in them, the sure, steady descent into the pit of Hell.

But you will ask perhaps, What do you mean by these little sins? and why, and how, do little sins lead to greater?

Sins are called little in different ways. The life of our souls is their union with God. The deadliness of sin is, that we, His creatures, choose and love something else rather than God; so that we choose to offend God and to break His commandments, rather than give up that which we choose against them. As God is the Fountain of all Goodness, Right, Perfection, Wisdom, Holiness, Bliss, so is He its unvarying rule and measure. Whatever then He declares to be good, right, perfect, wise, holy, that is and must be so, and must lead to Bliss, with which it is, in God, one. The nearer anything is to the mind of God, and the more it is conformed to His Eternal Wisdom and Right, so much more it has of wisdom and right. And the further anything is removed from, or at variance with the Wisdom and Holiness of God, so much the more it has of folly and wickedness. There are then degrees of sin or of holiness, as a thing has in it more or less of that which is pleasing or displeasing to God, as it is more in harmony with, or is more alien from, His All-Perfect Wisdom and Goodness.

Now some things are so plainly and notably against the mind and will of God and His very Being, that to do those things is at once to cast aside the friendship and the love of God. These things separate the soul at once from God, and from its life. Such sins are called 'deadly sins.' A man cannot choose such sins and choose God at the same time. If he chooses them, he parts at once from God.

Now since deadly sin is to choose that which is notably against the will of God, a sin may not be in itself deadly, either because a person does not fully or deliberately choose it; or because it is not so plainly against the will of God, that, in doing it, he rejects God. And this may be, when a thing is either little by comparison, in itself, as an idle word, or when it is a slight act of the same sort which in a greater degree, is deadly sin.

Little sins, then, prepare for greater and deadly sins. 1) Because they accustom the soul to the same sort of sin. It is a heathen proverb, 'No one all at once becomes wholly base.' It is a law of nature itself, that what we do and have pleasure in, that we do more frequently. What people have once done, they long more to do again. Custom becomes a second nature, and what they once scarcely thought of, they cannot do without. But more commonly, although the sin or the self-indulgence becomes a sort of nature to them, it does not give them the same pleasure as before; and then follow further sins, to replace the freshness of the first.

But then too, all sin is against our better nature. By the very least sins, we do violence to our best selves. In whatever way any one has sinned, they may recollect the pain of the first slight act of the sin. It is like that soft delicate down on flower or fruit; a slight touch takes away the freshness of the bloom, and leaves it tarnished. There is a fine instinct as to what is right or not right, unwritten in laws, not set down in words of Holy Scripture, easily, too easily, effaced; yet written by the finger of God Himself in the very inmost heart. A fine delicate

conscience is never lost without our will, but it is hard to recover. Yet every slightest act of sin impairs it. The first slight deceit is a greater wound to the soul at first, than deliberate lying afterwards. The first slight dishonesty shocks the soul more, than great theft, if it perseveres. A slight excess will surprise one more than, in time, habitual drunkenness. A careless or unloving word will pain the soul more at first, than backbiting or slandering later. The first very slightest act against modesty will distress the soul more, than the most deadly and disgraceful deeds of sin do the soul which has inured itself to those first acts.

These first fresh natural feelings are fences, with which God hedges in the soul from greater sins. They are not overthrown all at once. Nature itself rebels against their being cast aside at once. They cannot at once be trampled down and trodden under foot. And so Satan would persuade people to let him take away the fence, stick by stick. The hedge which God has planted around the soul, seems to stand yet; it looks as if it would resist. It is thinned, yet it stands. It is weak, but it is a fence still. Perhaps the soul is the more fatally secure, because it does not give way with the very first shock. It *did* just resist, or escape, yesterday; why should it not to-day? and if to-day, why not to-morrow? And so the soul deceives herself, that she lies secure behind it, until Satan sees his time, and the "[a] wild boar out of the wood" despises the feeble remains, rushes through, and tramples in the dust the vine which God had planted.

[a] Ps. lxxx. 13.

So, then, in the way of nature, little sins prepare for great, because the little sins strengthen the thirst for what is forbidden, and weaken the resistance of the soul: they dull the conscience by the very fact of doing them; they take away the fineness of judging right from wrong. It is far easier to see the difference between right and wrong, than between wrong and very wrong. The soul cannot endure feeling itself enslaved to wrong and alien from God. And therefore, step by step, it inures itself to wrong. It *will* not think that *this* is wrong, or *that* is wrong, and so at last it *can*not. Each step is so little beyond the other, each shade of sin so melts into another: that the soul cannot see the boundary-marks between right and wrong, which it has itself trodden down. It has so confused its judgement as to what is wrong, that, at last, its rule as to right and wrong is gone. It has yielded step by step, act by act. Why should this step which it has not yet taken, be more wrong than that which it took just before? It dares not own to itself that *that* was wrong; else it would have to give it up, to blame itself, to repent, to deny itself what it would have; and then perhaps to go back and yet further back, until it had reached the place where it set off in petty sins. It knows how long the way is, which it would have to retrace; the embarrassments it would have in returning; it does not know what lies before it. Perhaps it thinks that no further sin lies before it. It tampers with every shade and circumstance of sin, until it persuades itself, that nothing is sin, except some extremest form of sin.

You must yourselves have heard how some, who have closed their lives through a disgraced end by this world's law, have begun by some profaning of the Lord's day. The childish theft of some little coin has ended in open robbery and murder. The thoughtless questioning of some truth has closed in denying God. The petty vanity, or wrong familiarity leads on to the defiling of God's temple, the degradation of the whole being, the corruption of others, the loathsomeness of self, the pit of Hell. The slight jealousy is closed by murder; the petty dishonesty by suicide, shrinking from this world's disgrace and ending in shame and everlasting contempt. "[b]Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" asked the mighty man, who, the next day, by murdering his master, began to do it. If these exceeding sins can be done, step by step, how much more every lesser shade of sin! The downward course to evil is easy, smooth, soft, noiseless, but becomes more rapid at every minute of its descent. He who is careless to-day in casting aside some wrong thought which gives him pleasure will be more careless to-morrow; and then more and more, until at last he allows it to himself wholly, and his soul is defiled, and grace is lost, and his soul is sick even unto death.

This is what human nature, if left to itself, would always do. Every little sin is the parent of another sin, and that of another, and that of others. Sins increase and multiply, unless they be checked by the grace of God, until they have filled the whole frame, deadened the whole conscience, poisoned the whole

[b] 2 Kings viii. 13.

life, driven out from the soul its true life, God; made room within the soul for its enemy, the Evil one. In the course of nature there are no paces backwards. On, on, on, it ever is. People stand on the brink of sin; they just feel it with the extremity of their feet, not venturing even their whole foot into it; then it wets the soles of the feet: it is shallow; it reaches but to the ancles; to the knees; they trust themselves to it, because their strength, they think, is firm; even if the waters come up to the neck, their life, though in peril, is, they think, yet safe; but the waters rise and swell continually, and they who are not in the Ark, mighty though they be, perish.

And this is the exceeding misery of petty sins that they bring men into this state of nature, reft of the grace of God. Evil is strengthened; the natural fence against sin is weakened; the love of God is chilled in the soul; the grace of God is resisted, until it is withdrawn; Satan triumphs step by step, until he is lord and master of the soul.

2. Little sins continually admitted into the soul, do not at once destroy life and love, but they chill all fervour and nobleness of soul and make it lukewarm. They have a hopelessness of their own, greater than that even of deadly sin, the hopelessness of lukewarmness which God rejects. "[c] I would," says our Lord, "that thou wert either cold or hot." Such souls would neither have the peril of great sins, nor the trouble of great virtues; they would have the pleasure of sin without its punishment; the reward of righteousness, without its toil and hardness, its struggles or its victory. They would not forsake

[c] Rev. iii. 15.

the indulgence of sin, nor themselves be forsaken by God. They neither love God, so as to resist evil for His love; nor fear Him, so as to be scared from it by His awe. They have no warmth, wherewith to love Him; nor do they feel cold enough to need to love Him more. They sin as far as they dare, so that they may hope to escape damnation; but they think of themselves or thank God, that they are not as others.

3. Little sins unnerve the whole soul. A person cannot be lame in one foot, and walk as if he were whole. His whole powers of walking are spoiled. So carelessness as to one little sin relaxes the whole soul. Carelessnesses never go single. Idleness is on that very ground, called 'the mother of all vices,' because the whole soul is softened, and unresisting, and open to the assault of any sin. The whole life and salvation of the soul is in its union with God and cleaving fast to Him. Little sins relax a man's hold of God. "[d] Hold thou me up," says the Psalmist, "and I shall be safe." By little sins man withdraws his hand from Him Who holds him; he looses his hold that he may lay hold of this or that vanity, like a child gathering flowers on some steep edge. He would hold both, his Father's hand, and the object which he wishes, until something more strongly draws him, and he loses his hold wholly, and, grasping what he longs for, falls headlong with it.

Every little sin, consciously or carelessly repeated, is a withdrawal from God. They are little choices of some little thing which conscience, if listened to, will say, at least, are not according to the mind of

[d] Ps. cxix. 117.

God. Each choice is not by itself deadly, because the soul does not fully see at first, on account of their littleness, that it is choosing something rather than God. But many such choices form a habit of so choosing. And then the friendship and union with God is loosened, when the soul continually wills, even in little things, what God wills not. We see how even human friendship is weakened by petty variances. Much more, when the soul, which is formed for God, chooses consciously again and again, even in little things, what it knows or suspects is not after the mind of God. They bind the soul more and more to passing things, and loose it from Him Who is its only unchangeable Stay.

And so grievous deadly sin is the end, in some, through God's final abandonment, leaving them to the natural fruit of indulged sin; in others, through His mercy, that their very fall may awaken them to themselves and Him. How in David's case, was one wrong, heedless look followed by adultery and murder! Had David then, but remembered his own Psalm, "[e] O turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity," how had all that dreadful history been hindered! How had his whole life and character been different! How had he been simply the man after God's own heart, not the saintly penitent, or the 'blood-defiled saint!' Many sin like David; few, very few, repent like David; few repent at all. It is easier to find those amid the corruption of the world, who have by God's grace, kept themselves unspotted, than to find those who, having fallen, repent with a true repentance.

[e] Ps. cxix. 37.

Little sins then, are perilous to the soul, because they break down the safeguards against sin, with which God fences it in by nature; they accustom the soul to the thought of further sin; they take off the snow-white fineness of the purity of a soul in grace; they relax the earnestness of the soul; they indispose it to good; they dispose it to further evil; they come between the soul and God; they weaken the mind; they blind the understanding; they chill the affections; they dull the soul; they divide the heart, they hinder it from trustful repose in God; at the last, step by step, they estrange the soul from God, cause God to withdraw His grace from the soul; they invite *his* attacks, who is ever at hand, in wait for the careless soul.

For the evil thoughts which come into our souls, are not our's only. We have not temptations from within only. We know and feel often, that the thought darted into our souls, and which we hate, is not our's. "[f] Resist the devil," says Holy Scripture, "and he will flee from you." Contrariwise then, if you resist not, he will press in upon you.

'It may,' says a father, 'seem a wondrous and unheard-of thing which I would say. But I sometimes think that great sins require not so great care to avoid them, as little slight sins. For the nature of sin makes us shun those greater sins. But *these* make us sluggish, even because they *are* little; and while they are despised, the soul cannot rouse itself nobly to cast them out. Thence, through our negligence, from little they soon become great, as you see in bodily diseases too. Unless Judas had thought it

[f] S. James iv. 7.

a little thing to steal the money of the poor, he would never have come to that exceeding sin of betraying the Lord. The Jews too, unless they had thought vain-glory a very little sin, would not have gone on to slay Christ. In this way are all sins done. For no one leaps suddenly into the extreme of wickedness. For the soul hath a certain implanted and inborn modesty, which it cannot at once trample on and cast aside; but by little and little, through negligence it perishes.'

Since then none falls into heavy sin at once, guard the entrance of thy soul against the lighter, and in God's grace it is safe. Thy soul is a dwelling-place of God, which thou art to keep pure for Him. It cannot be taken against thy will. It is besieged on all sides, but it is impregnable. For the Lord Himself will be a wall of fire around thee against thy spiritual enemies, unless thou thyself open a gate to them. But once opened, thou knowest not that thou wilt again be able to close it, until they have thronged in and filled it. A strong door well barred within, will hold out against even great force. Be it ever so little ajar, or opened to let in a little sin, as great a force will hardly close it.

My brethren, the sins to which many of you are tempted are, in themselves, lesser sins; but they may, on that very account, not be lesser sins to you. It is not a little sin, to fall continually into little sins, if you are by circumstances fenced out from greater. Little sins are not little, if they are the greatest in which you are tried, and you resist them not. Little sins multiplied form a vast heap, a habit of sin. Little impatiences make a whole character of discon-

tent with God's Providence, little censoriousnesses make a hard severe unloving character; little selfishnesses make up a selfish character: little detractions, little readinesses to believe evil, little suspicions, destroy charity. Yet for what does discontent with God, little wrong thoughts allowed, prepare? for the Presence or for the absence of God Who is love, and if so, for Heaven or hell?

Tamper not wilfully with little sins; yet neither despond if, through human infirmity, without thy will, thou have been overtaken. Only pray God, in the instant, as soon as thou art aware or rememberest or seest what thou hast done, that God would forgive thee each special, slightest sin, one by one. And especially when thou art about in the Sacrament of Thy Saviour's Body and Blood to receive Himself in thy soul, pray Him to bring with Him the fulness of His grace.

Think not then with yourselves, when you are tempted, 'it is but a little thing; it is not clearly against God's law; it does not stand forbidden in plain words, in God's book.' Think not which of God's commands may be neglected as small; but think how Great, how Good, how Loving God is, Whom it might offend; think how God has loved you; and as thou wouldest not cherish a little spark in thy bosom, as thou wouldest not take into thy frame one drop of deadliest poison, so neither allow willingly one slight sin, to lodge there; for it is to admit into thy soul God's enemy: it is to receive a poison which destroys thy soul's life; it is a fire, which, unless God's mercy which thou rejectest extinguish it, will burn even to hell.

SERMON X.

EVIL OF LITTLE SINS.

S. Luke xvi. 10.

"*He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.*"

Our Lord spake these words chiefly of the littleness of all the things, which people in this world would call great; and especially of great riches. He was speaking of "the mammon of unrighteousness," i. e. those means, whatever they be, which men abuse to unrighteous ends, and He was bidding us to make friends of it, by using what we have, little or great, to a good end, by giving it to those poorer than ourselves, for love of Him.

But our Lord's words, being Divine, always go beyond the single thing of which He is speaking. So here He is speaking also of faithfulness in all which is entrusted to us here, whatever gifts have been given to any of us, wealth, knowledge, bodily strength, quickness of mind, or whatever else it be; and He lays down one great rule for our whole

lives and for every portion of them. Faithfulness and loyalty of the soul is one. One Object we have of our whole being, God. God is One. We ourselves, body, soul, spirit, are one. We cannot, if we would, halve ourselves. We cannot, our Lord warns us, "[b]serve God and mammon." We are one; and therefore one we must serve, one we must choose, one we must obey; and to that one we shall belong, with him we shall live, his we shall be, everlastingly. In our whole life and in every act of life we are making that choice. The things themselves are little; but the same mind which we have about the least thing, *that* we should have about the greatest of the same kind. People seem sometimes to think it hard, that eternity should depend upon their choice as to these things, in this short span of life. They deceive themselves continually, thinking that they would do some great good, if they had the opportunity to do it; that they would avoid great evil, even though they were tempted to it. They picture themselves to themselves, attaining great things without the toil; conquering great temptations without feeling their force.

Our Lord read us, my brethren! He knew the creatures which He had made, better than we read or know ourselves. And yet we should judge of others, as He tells us of ourselves. Who would trust his money to one whom he knew to pilfer in little things? Who would trust a matter of great importance to one careless about the least? Who would in a great thing believe one who habitually told him little lies? Who would think him sincere

[b] S. Luke xvi. 13.

and true in great things, who commonly used little flatteries and smooth words? Who would expect one to use great exertions, who was uniformly listless and indolent in things of some, though of less, moment? Who would trust one with a secret, who talked at random about others, or risk, that one who pried as to little things, would not possess himself wrongly of some greater knowledge, if he could? Who would expect that one would use self-command and self-control in some great thing, who, all his life-long, was giving way in little pettishnesses, little sharpnesses, little ill-natured words, when vexed in the lesser?

True, it will sometimes be, that a sudden greater occasion will call out in a person just that good quality, which we should least have thought of. Some strong master-feeling will overbear all these hindrances at once; the bands which he had allowed to be bound around him, are for the time as tow when it feels the fire. He is free. God does give us such great occasions, from time to time, to arouse us, to open our eyes, to awaken us, as you would the drowsy man sleeping on the snow. But how do we then judge? Do we think that he had not weakened himself by the little ways in which he had sinned before? No! We are surprised at it, and by our very surprise, we shew our sense of the evil which persons had done themselves, how they had injured their own self-mastery. A man's or woman's bad companions will jeer them as squeamish, or nice, or over-particular, that, having done whatever other lesser wrong they have done, they stop short of any further wrong which they wish them to do.

They taunt them with what they did before, as if they were all of a sudden changed, or were insincere before, or are so now, or are acted upon by mere fear of man, or some motive of interest, or were all at once becoming scrupulous, and 'turning saint,' as they say. How many souls have been stung into greater evil by such reproaches! How have some tender, loving souls, been goaded into deadly evil and their own utter ruin by the taunt, 'you do not care for me, if you will not do this!' And yet those who taunted them would not have dared to breathe the polluting thought of evil, had not lesser evil of the same sort gone before. People do not expect a stranger whom they meet, to turn back with them and go *their* road. One who is going on the broad road, does not expect to prevail on one to join him, whom he sees stedfast on the narrow. But if you *do* walk ever so little a way with another on that broad road which leadeth to destruction, they will be surprised at your turning back or stopping still, or hesitating, and will, by all means, open or crafty, by gentle persuasion or by threats, by undermining your remaining purpose or by storming you, try to persuade you to go on.

And if you do stop, what would you yourself think, but that you had had a great escape? What would any good person think of you? That it had been a very great mercy, and a token of the great love of God. What would Satan do, who had been foiled? Satan, or your evil companions, would watch you, to see whether you were in earnest, or whether this were only a passing cloud of feeling, the morning dew, which the sun's burning heat will

soon dry up. They would not believe you. The evil never believed the good. And how would they try you? If they found you really resolute as to the greater sin, they would try you again with the less. You had started back from the precipice, when you saw it. What would they do but try to bring you by little steps back again to it? What would they fear, but that you should start back and depart from the whole coast of sin?

And if you again allowed yourself to be drawn into those lesser sins, what then? The lesser sins would then be no longer little, because they would be sins against light. You would now know what they would, in their own nature, lead to. You would be tempting God to leave you; you would be inviting the evil to press in upon you. What would be thought, but that you were not ripened enough for evil before, yet that you were now in the way to it?

What are all these, but proofs in our own consciences, in slow gradual falls, in the fears or hopes of the good, in the evil desires of the evil, that others should be as bad as themselves, to draw them into the same pit, to gain, or gratify themselves, through their sins? What *do* they all but repeat with one voice our Lord's words, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much?"

True, they are very often little things in themselves, but God is great. They are not great sins in themselves, but God is very good. And it is a very great and a very evil thing, knowingly, of one's own choice, even in a very little thing to do what

will displease the Great and Good God. You cannot imagine one of the holy Angels, or any of the inhabitants of heaven choosing in the very least thing what is against His Holy Will. You cannot think it of yourselves hereafter, if, by God's mercy, you attain to heaven. Why not? Why should it be so impossible then, why should it seem to us unbearable then, and that it would mar the peace and joy and bliss of heaven, if it is to be so bearable now? Why but that Angels would no longer be Angels, if they did not do always the will of their and our Father in heaven? Why but that throughout the whole compass of heaven every heart and voice is attuned to one, so that nothing jars, but one transporting harmony runs throughout all created beings; one power of love beats, as it were, through the heart of all creation, so that all souls should, through their own love, be, as it were, but one? One light of truth illumines all, and transforms them all into its own light; one wisdom penetrates all, one ocean of joy and sweetness encompasses all, fills all; one Sight holds all entranced in itself, the unspeakable blessed-making sight of the ever-blessed Trinity? Why but that we shall not only see God, live with God, be with God, have God, enjoy God; but God shall be all things in all: God shall be our Wisdom, our Knowledge, our Life, our Light, our Love, our peace, our goodness, our joy, our rest, our gladness, our sweet harmony? How could we be, for one instant, in one flash of thought, in the very slightest thing which can be conceived by the mind, other than of one mind with God, when, if we were, God would no longer be all things in us? How would that ever-

lasting harmony of love and praise be marred, in which all voices, of Seraphim, Cherubim, Archangels, Angels, holy souls, blend in one, if but one voice faltered! How would one discordant sound break in on the sweet accord of the thousand thousand harps, which, from heaven to heaven, thrill with one jubilee of endless love!

But then, again, my brethren, if heaven could not be heaven, nor Seraphim be kindled with their burning love, nor Angels be those blessed spirits which they are, nor we be ever joined to that angel-life hereafter, if we could *then*, in the very faintest imaginable thing, be ever pierced even by one lightning thought of willing any thing, other than in exactest oneness of harmony with the mind of God, how can it be otherwise than a most unbearable evil *now?* I am not speaking *now* of mere infirmities of nature, of things without our will, against our will, with which our will does not consent in us. But I am speaking of what the world around you would call very little things, to which you are perhaps, some of you, so inured, as to count them very little things, but which, if you think of the purity of heaven, or of the Good God's All-perfect Being, or of the love of Jesus for each one of you, you would know or suspect to be not according to the mind of God. These things people partly will. They would not give full consent to the sinful act, but they are not sorry to have the pleasure of the wrong thought in their mind. They will take pleasure in some thought of themselves, some passing vanity, some praise of others, some personal appearance, some contempt of others' infirmities, some fancied superiority; or they

will allow themselves some petty mislike of another, so that they can say to themselves they do not wish them evil; or they imagine pleasant flattering things of themselves in idle-day dreams; or they knowingly exaggerate, in order to get some praise; or they evade speaking the truth, in order to avoid some blame; or they will speak with lightness of things holy, good, or pure.

Now if these or even worse things happen to us without our will, through human weakness or even our own past sins, these things will not hurt us, they will not be imputed to us; they may even, by the grace of God, through the increase of our humility, be overruled to our endless good. But conscience, my brethren, is a very sacred thing. It is the voice of God, the mind of God, the Spirit of God within us. We do ourselves unspeakable evil, if even, in the very least thing, we go against its warnings. It is not enough, not to do what it denounces loudly. It is not enough to say, 'I will not do this, because it is *clearly* wrong.' You must not do or say what you *suspect* to be wrong. You must have often felt that, if when the doubt arose, you did not say or do the thing immediately, when the temptation was past, you had no doubt at all. You doubted while you were inclined to do it, and because you were inclined. When you had, by God's grace, resisted, the spell was broken, the mist vanished, the light of Truth shone clearly upon you.

As, then, we listen, or do not listen, to conscience in the very least things, conscience becomes more alive or dead, finer or more blunted, quicksighted or blinded. For we are listening or not listening,

even in little things, to the voice of God. We are choosing, or not choosing, what is according to the mind of God. But 'it is but a little thing' you say. So much the worse, my brethren, if for a little thing we wilfully despise the grace of the Great God. How can you hope that you will ever please Him in any great thing, if you cannot, that is, if you *will* not, in those small things, cross your own will, for love of the Infinite love of God. Those little things have a special offensiveness of their own. How lovingly does our Lord upbraid His disciples, "[c] Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" With these, indeed, it was not wilful. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. Sorrow made them heavy. Yet the very ground of His loving blame was the shortness of the time. It was a little thing which He asked of them, Who had given to them the toil of His Life, was giving to them the Sufferings of His Death. Should you not feel it a great slight of you, if you had strictly charged one you loved, as they valued your love, not to do some very little thing? What if you besought them again and again, for love of you, not to do it, and they did it to your face? Should you not be greatly pained, if your heart was set upon its not being done, or if you saw and knew that it was very bad for those you loved to do it? No master or servant would hold it an excuse, that the servant persisted in accounting it a little thing, when the master charged it strictly upon him. The servant might think his master particular; yet if he found him a good master, he would not do it. Much less would he think of doing it, just when his mas-

[c] S. Matt. xxvi. 40.

ter's eye was upon him. Why then should we be less faithful in little things to our Great and Good Master in heaven, Whose eye is ever upon us, than we are to one another on earth? He, that Good Master Who died for us, is pleased much more readily, served much more delightfully, rewards, oh how bountifully!

Once more then, my brethren, any choice, however little, of any thing which you even suspect God wills you not to do, is to despise God. It is one frame of mind, whether in little things or in great, which wilfully sets at nought the Will of God. But therewith, even if you are saved, how do you forfeit the grace of God! how do you tarnish your true glory! how do you diminish your future bliss! "[d]If," our Lord proceeds, "ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" And "if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

Those who have the great things or the riches of this world at their command, try first, in little things, those whom they would afterwards entrust with greater. So it is in great empires, in mighty armies, in high offices of the state, in every rank and service and state of life. The faithful boy grows mostly into the faithful man. He who is faithful in lower offices in a household is raised, step by step, to higher, or more trust is reposed in him, or more is entrusted to him. This is given as a rule even of high offices in the Church. "[e]If a man

[d] S. Luke xvi. 11. [e] 1 Tim. iii. 5.

know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?"

All these, the orderings of God's providence, are so many pictures of the dealings of His grace. "To him that hath shall more be given." As we are faithful in little duties, little trials, little obediences, little means and instances of doing God's will, God will enlighten our understandings, and strengthen our wills, and enlarge our affections, and bedew us with His love, and fill us with larger grace, and enlarge our hearts for greater fulness of His love, and dwell in our hearts when He has enlarged them, and keep our souls in His peace, and fit us for nearer service and larger knowledge of Him, and closer union with Himself and will give us the true riches.

But what is then that, which our Lord calls another's, in which we are to be faithful? What is that which, if we are faithful, is to be given us as our own? That which is another's, or more fully 'that which is alien from us,' alien from us in its nature, alien from us, because it is not given us as our own, is every thing in this world of which we have the use. Alien, because they are akin only to this our lower nature; they supply this life's needs; but we need them only for a time, we brought them not into the world with us; we shall not carry them away with us; for we shall not need them *there*. Happiest often, even here, they who have fewest of them! Who so happy as that disciple who lay in *His* Bosom Who had not where to lay His Head?

[f] S. Matt. xxv. 29.

And what then is that which shall be given to us as our own? What but that which shall abide in us, the good things of the life to come? And how are they to be our own? Because we are formed in the image of God. These earthly things are not akin to us, but we are akin to God. These earthly things cannot abide *in* us, but we can abide and dwell in God, and God can and will abide in us. That which shall be given us as our own, shall be God Himself; for He has taught us each to say, "[g] O God, Thou art my God." Him shall our own eyes behold; Him shall our own souls embrace; with Him shall our spirits be united; for He hath said, "[h] I will dwell in them and will walk in them." None will divide that Great Good with us. It shall be to us wholly our own; we shall have none the less, because others, who are holier and more faithful here, shall have more. We shall have all that we can contain, and more than we can contain. Our understanding shall be cleansed to receive His Wisdom; our affections, to be filled and blessed in His Love. His Joy shall be our Joy; His Will, our Will; His Love, our Love; His Wisdom, our Wisdom; His Knowledge, our Knowledge. There will be no measure of our fulness, but the measure of His Faithfulness, Who rewardeth "[i] every man according to his works." We shall all be filled, but as we are faithful here, we shall be enlarged for greater fulness of joy in God hereafter.

Will ye not toil then, my brethren, by the grace of God, for these short years, in all things little or great, that ye may, in the end, hear that blissful

[g] Ps. lxiii. 1. [h] 2 Cor. vi. 16. [i] S. Matt. xvi. 27.

Voice "[k] Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful in few things;" the little things, little duties of this life; "be thou ruler over many things," the abundant blessings of the life to come; "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," the joy which thine own Lord Christ Jesus, Himself thy Joy, hath with the Father and the Holy Ghost, One God blessed for evermore.

[k] S. Matt. xxv. 23.

SERMON XI.

GOOD OF LITTLE ACTS TO PLEASE GOD.

S. Matt. x. 42.

"*Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*"

I have spoken to you often of the peril of little sins. I would now speak to you of the blessing of little acts done for the love of God. In so speaking, I am not speaking of any goodness of our own, but of the grace of God; nor of the goodness of any such acts in themselves, as if by themselves they deserved any reward, but of the boundless love of God, Who wills to accept such little acts, nay, Who will not pass over one such little act without its reward, and for His love for us, surrounds us with such multitudes of ways and means to please Him.

Every where throughout this our world, wasted by sin and sorrow, reigns one wide waste of the gifts of God. His very natural gifts are made to be wasted now. The greatest beauties of nature are what man rarely sees; what are spread around him are neglected, abused, wasted, spoiled, snatched with un-

thankfulness. His best and greatest gifts are ever the most abused. Great talents, great beauty, great wealth, high rank, great strength of mind and body, are the more offered to some idol, and so to Satan. But the widest waste is of that which is most precious, the grace of God, union with God, membership with Christ, the end of His Incarnation, the price of His Blood.

Our Lord tells us how in every little act, at every moment of our lives, we are encompassed with the grace of God.

One thing alone our Great God, Who made and redeemed us, asks of us. Jesus, our Lord and God, died for us; He does not ask of us to die for Him. *He* "had not where to lay His Head;" He gives each of us the homes which we have, and whatever comforts any of us have in them, He asks us not mostly to leave them for Him; or if He does, He offers us a wider, more beautiful, more peaceful, blissful Home, in Himself, our Abiding-place. *He* "passed whole nights in prayer to God" for us: He bids us "sleep and take our rest," so that, before we sleep, we commend ourselves to Him, and when we wake, we pray Him to take care of us during the day following. *He* "fasted for us forty days and forty nights" in one, wholly without food: He gives us that, wherewith to refresh our bodies, so that we pamper them not, and sin not against Him therein. *He* was reproached, reviled, persecuted, way-laid, mocked, scourged, crucified, for us: He asks of *us* mostly no great sufferings. For the most part, He asks us only to take patiently whatever little troubles or sufferings He sees good to heal us of our

sins; and then, what would be far less than the just reward of our sins, He sanctifies by His own Precious Sufferings, and accounts them, if borne patiently, as borne for Himself. *He*, the Fountain of love, came among us to receive hatred only for His love; His Love has, so far, at least, leavened the world with His love, that love, shewn for love of Him, mostly gains respect, if not thankfulness. If we did what He bids, there would be throughout the whole world one atmosphere of love.

Jesus does not ask of us, commonly, great things; although if we thought of His boundless love for us, who could count any thing great? He asks us but one thing; our hearts, that we should love Him. And then, if we will love Him, He promises that, for every the least thing which we do out of love for Him, He will give us a reward.

Nothing could be less than "a cup of cold water." It would cost any of us nothing but the little trouble of fetching it. Had He spoken of 'warm water,' some might say that they had not firing, wherewith to warm it; or they could not always have it. Nor does He speak of a large vessel, which all have not, but a cup, which all have. He instances something, which the very poorest can always have, can always give; which yet is very refreshing to the faint and weary; and He would picture to us, how He, our Lord and our God, accepts, as done to Him, every the least act of love, by which our fellow Christians, who with us are members of Him, are refreshed. He, the Maker of heaven and earth, willeth to be refreshed in them. But, more widely yet, He would tell us, that, through our whole lives, there is none,

the very least thing done for love of Him, which will lose its reward.

What a rich treasure of goodness the love of our Good God is spreading all around us! What a sea of mercy we are living in! The gifts of God are like the air we breathe. With every breath we breathe, we may please God.

Had God asked of us a very great thing, do we not think that, if we could, we would have done it? Does not the love of Jesus deserve it? But now He asks of us nothing, which, with His grace, it is hard to do. He says to each of us, 'love ME, and what you do daily, do for love of ME; and for each such act in your whole lives, you shall have a separate reward.'

We are so slow to take Almighty God at His word, my brethren. His love for us is so great, and His ways of shewing it so simple, and His readiness to be pleased with us so amazing and so tender, that, like Jacob, our hearts faint, and we are slow to believe it.

We are so apt, as to this life or the life to come, to think of God, as dealing with us, in a sort of general way, just as we do; 'in a lump,' as we speak. We think that some persons are bad, some good; some better than most, some worse; that many believe in Him and have a living faith in Him; and that these, although with a cold sort of love, love Him. Or, rather perhaps, we think that, as a matter of course, such as *do* believe in Him must love Him, because Holy Scripture says so; and therefore we take it for granted that they do, although we should, many of us, be puzzled to say, as to ourselves or others, what, in us or in them, can be any fruit

of so Divine a thing, as the Love of God. Yet since God has said it, so we believe it, that some shall be rewarded, some punished, and each more or less, as the case may be with each; although (as I said) we should be perplexed to think what our actions have to do with the reward, not because (as is true) the reward is so unspeakably out of all proportion to the good works of any the highest saints, but because most of us have so few good works at all.

However, we do know it to be true, that "God will reward every one according to his works." And, it may be, we have pondered at times on our Lord's words, "In My Father's House, are many mansions;" all united in one through love, all full of unutterable brightness of light and transporting joy, but each possessing its own fulness of delight, and knowledge, and wisdom, and love, and nearness to God, which its inhabitants are fitted to contain. We may know too that among the blessed spirits in heaven there are different orders; Angels and Archangels, Thrones and Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim; and that each has its own nearness to the fulness of the Divine Presence, and its own largeness of the knowledge and love of God. In some one of these mansions, perhaps the very lowest, it may be, that we hope that we ourselves may be. In some order of the blessed spirits, under the feet of all God's elect, last and least, we hope, perhaps, that a place may be found for us.

And yet most of us, if we are true to ourselves, would rather wonder how, with love so poor, we, so faulty, so earthly, so full of earth, can be fitted to be with the holy Angels at all, and so would rather picture ourselves somewhere in heaven, in some outer

circle of it, than among those blessed beings whose companions we feel ourselves so little suited to be.

We think, then, of getting to heaven, when we think at all, in a sort of general way, as something purchased for us (as it indeed is) through the Precious Blood of Christ. We do not think what our own acts, one by one, day by day and hour after hour, have to do with this our everlasting lot. People think, at most, that if they lead bad lives, they will, if they do not repent somehow, go to hell; or they think that, if they believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in Him and are not very great sinners, or if they repent of their sins, they shall come to heaven.

But what, I fear, my brethren, you have mostly not thought of, or have thought of very little, is, that every act in your lives is not only a step towards heaven or towards hell; it not only leads to God or from God; but, wherever you are, each act has to do with your everlasting condition, when there. If you believed this and thought of it, and brought it home to yourselves, you could not be so careless as many of you are. Thus, for instance, it is one of the most common deceits of man's heart, that there will be time enough to repent bye and bye. Such will have pleasure now, and pleasure hereafter; pleasure against God's will now, and then pleasure with God for ever. Well! be it so, for the time! Let us suppose that God promises what He does not promise. Let us suppose that God, however He be sinned against, will continue His grace; that man, however he sin, will not harden his own heart into final impenitence; that God will, through years of unrepentance, or carelessness, or sloth, or neglect

of Him, continue to any of you life, in which to repent, and grace, whereby to repent;—let us for the moment suppose all this, which it would be very perilous to suppose; what then? Will it be all gain, (as you are now tempted to think,) and not endless loss? Endless, unutterable loss it must, at the very best, be; for it will be the loss of all the opportunities, of your own free-will, by the grace of God, to please God; it will be the loss of that measure of bliss, that fulness of reward, which is in the blessed-making sight of God and love of God.

Elsewhere our Lord says, that "[a] when the Son of man shall appear in His glory, He shall reward every man according to his works;" that they who "[b] are persecuted falsely for His Name's sake shall have *great* reward in heaven." He bade us "[c] give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom." He would say, 'Full, rich and overflowing shall the reward be; there shall be no void, no lack, no empty space; full, as it can be contained and more than can be contained, shall it be poured forth into your very hearts.' Again, "[d] he that soweth little shall reap little, and he that soweth plenteously, shall reap plenteously." "[e] God is not unrighteous that He should forget your labour and work which proceedeth of love." God Who gives us all things, Who gives us the strength, the power, the grace, the will to work for Him, counts it part of His own righteousness to reward the labour, which through His grace we have done.

[a] S. Matt. xvi. 27. [b] Ib. v. 11, 12. [c] S. Luke vi. 38.
[d] 2 Cor. ix. 6 [e] Heb. vi. 10.

But not only is there, in a general way, a rich reward for those who have laboured much; a great reward to those who have suffered greatly for Christ's sake; not only shall those who sow plenteously reap plenteously; but no one thing done for the love of God shall pass without its reward. God says, "[f]He shall bring every secret thing into judgement, whether it be good or bad;" but if every bad thing is brought into judgement, in order to be punished, assuredly every good thing shall be brought into judgement, in order to be rewarded. Again, "[g]every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." Now you know how, in piece-work[h], not only the labour of the week or day is counted as a whole, but every single act of that labour tells. Each act entitles only to some such small portion of the wages, that it cannot be counted; for earthly masters, however kind and good they may be, cannot reward like our rich bounteous Master in Heaven. Still, every single act of that earthly labour *does* count towards the wages at the end. And those who work well, feel encouraged so to work, because no labour is lost; every time the sickle is thrust into the corn, every handful which is mowed, every spot which is cleared from weeds, is so much gained and done. If one does half as much more than another, he has half as much more wages. Now this is just the way in which Almighty God vouchsafes to speak to us, to deal with us. He knows what is in our hearts which He has made, and He appeals to them, He speaks to them; He says, "every man shall receive

[f] Eccl. xii. 14. [g] 1 Cor. iii. 8.

[h] Preached in the village Church of Pusey.

his own reward according to his own labour," and "[i] He that soweth plenteously, shall reap plenteously." As in earthly things each act of labour tells towards its end, so in our heavenly husbandry. You would be at a loss to tell, how much each single act tends towards its end. For the acts of labour are many, the reward slight. Not so in our heavenly toil. The acts of labour, many though they seem, are in comparison very few; the reward is infinite. The reward is beyond all measure, as God is above man; yet every act, done for the love of God, tells towards that infinite Reward.

Now picture to yourself this, my brethren. Suppose, in your yearly harvest, every separate act in working were to bring in to you the full wages of the day, and the whole wages of the day were to be as many thousand times what they now are, as you used separate acts in working, you would think that you could never work enough. Or if you could gather precious stones or gold like the dust, you would think yourselves very unwise, if you did not gather as much as ever you could.

This is a very faint picture of what you may do for eternity. Every day, in thought, word or deed, you may do many thousand acts. Every day, if your hearts were set upon it, you might please God in many thousand ways. Every hour has 3600 seconds. In every one of those seconds, you may do or go on doing what shall please God. For every one of the 60,000 seconds in your working day, you might if you so willed, have, by God's grace and mercy, your separate reward. A year might yield above 22 thou-

[i] 2 Cor. ix. 6.

sand, thousand[k] acts, for each of which God would, in the Great Day, give you an increased reward.

This seems a strange way of counting, my brethren. But I am counting up, as I said, not our deserts, but the boundless goodness and loving-kindness of our God. Our God has told us that nothing is so little, that it escapes Him. He counts the hairs of our heads; He sees every thought of our heart: He hearkens to our hearts, when, without voice or formed thought, they cry to Him. He knows our words, before they are on our tongue. He takes account of them. All are present at once to Him in His Infinite Mind in perfect clearness. And as He takes account of them, so He says of them, one by one, "[l] What thou layest out, I will repay thee."

Now to bring this before you in a simple way. You all came here this morning, I hope, to pray to God. Some came more devoutly than others, but all, I trust, wished to pray to God. But some, in every congregation, are more earnest than others. And so some, I fear, will have said but few prayers, and those sleepily; some will have said them with earnest sorrow for their past sins, because they displeased God; and will have thanked Him with their whole heart for all His mercies, and *that* very humbly, because they deserved them not; and some, now that Advent is come again, will have longed for His Coming, because they love Him; and some will have longed to behold His Face in love, and some more earnestly to fulfil *His* Commandments Who has loved them. No two persons have thought

[k] $60 \times 60 = 3{,}600 \times 17$ hours $= 61{,}200 \times 365 = 22{,}338000$.

[l] S. Luke x. 35.

alike, or prayed alike, or loved alike, or longed alike for His love. Now think of one who came here with the least devotion, or of one who with all the earnestness of his heart, in every word of prayer, love, thanksgiving, belief, prayed to, thanked, believed God, what a few things the one would have asked of God, how many and with what earnestness and love and humility the other. As they go away from Church, they will have gained very differently: the one may have just been kept in a state of grace, the other would have a large store with Him Who has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive." But if we follow this up, Sunday after Sunday, through a whole year, and through all the years of a whole life, what riches of grace and love and further reward the one will have laid up; how poor and little, the other. We speak of going to Church as one act; and so it is. And from all who come here in a faithful and honest heart, God accepts the intention of serving and worshipping Him. But when we are here, it is no longer one act. For there are as many acts, as there are thoughts of our heart, or desires to pray to Him, or longings for Him. All who pray say the same prayers, but no two persons have probably said the same prayer with the same devotion; no two then will have gained the same from it.

And so as to the rest of our lives. To take our meals is, in one sense, one act; yet, apart from any greediness in them, one may have been all the while thankful to God for all His goodness to us, another indifferent throughout, another may have remembered God, a little, more or less heartily, at the beginning and the end.

So it is in our rising, our lying down, our dressing, our down-sitting, our uprising, our speaking, our listening, our silent thoughts, our labours, our rest, in what is, in man's sight, of the slightest account or in the greatest, every thing has a beginning, middle, end; all things are made up of parts. In every little part of those parts, you may please God. In every thing you do, there is an inside and an outside; a part which man may see, and a part which God only can thoroughly see through. That inside is the intent with which we do it. S. Paul gives this rule to servants; and we are all God's servants; all of us have our outward task to do, and so, all must do it according to this rule. S. Paul then bids servants, "[m] be obedient to your masters according to the flesh in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." He would have us do inwardly, what we do outwardly. What you do for your master on earth, he would have you do for your Master in Heaven. And then he gives us this same ground for it; "[n] knowing," (he speaks of it, you see, as quite certain,) "knowing, that *whatsoever* good thing any man doeth,"—they are not great things then, nor things done by those who can do great things, but *every thing* which is done by every one by the grace of God, "*whatsoever* good thing *any* man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." So we have again the same teaching, as about the cup of cold water, that there is no one thing so small, done by any who could do only very little things, which

[m] Eph. vi. 5, 6. [n] Ib. 8.

would not be rewarded in the Great Day. "The same he shall receive of the Lord," but oh, with what bountiful increase in what heart of man cannot conceive of the Goodness of God Who is All-Good. Still it is the same which he shall receive, i.e. for every little thing done here to please God, for that very thing shall he receive from the goodness of our Great Master.

Now in every thing we do, there may be a whole world of inward life. One who had left all to follow Christ, and was living like Anna, in fastings and prayers by night and day, was told by God that he should see the greatest saint in the whole country where he was living[o]. So he thought that he should see some one who was living a stricter life, more devoted to God than he, and that he was to learn some great thing of him. But he was stopped, in the great crowded busy fickle learned city of Alexandria where a leather-cutter was at his work, and was told

[o] The basis of the story must be that related in a Greek history (translated by Paschasius, a Roman deacon who died A.D. 512) in Rosweyd de vita et verbis seniorum L. vii. p. 510. "While S. Antony was praying in his own cell a voice came to him saying, 'Antony, thou hast not yet arrived at the measure of the leather-cutter who lives in Alexandria.' The old man on hearing this rises in the early morn, took his staff and came in haste to the city of Alexandria. When he had gone in to the person designated, the man stood amazed, seeing one so great. The old man said to him, 'Tell me what thou doest, for on thy account have I left the desert and come here;' he answered, 'I do not know that I ever did anything good, and so rising from my bed every morning before I sit down at my work, I say, This whole city from the least to the greatest will enter the kingdom of God for their righteousnesses, but I alone for my sins shall go into everlasting punishment. Before I lie down late to rest I repeat the same from my inmost heart.' Antony, when he heard this, said, 'In truth, my

by God, that he was the greatest saint in Egypt. And yet in Egypt there were at that time many thousands living very devotedly to God; and this poor man had nothing to be seen about him, other than those of his own trade, or such as you have yourselves seen. But he was ever thinking of his own sins and of the good deeds of others, and was persuaded that he was the only person in that great city, unworthy to enter the kingdom of God: and God was preparing for him a place in His glory, nearer to Himself, than all the wise, and learned, or rich, or noble, or even His own pious servants in the wise and wealthy and learned and pious Egypt, (as it then was) because of the humility with which he loved God. And yet no one ever knew the name of that poor leather-cutter. His life was hid with Christ in God. But with what glory must he be resplendent now!

So then, in order to be very near God in Heaven, to have the fulness of His love, to behold Him in His Beauty and Goodness, it needs not that you should have more knowledge, or be 'more scholars' than you are, or more clever, or do greater things. It needs only that you should have more love, and that you should cleanse your hearts by the grace of Christ. For "[p] the pure in heart shall see God." A little love will have a little reward; a great love will have a great reward. This very love God will give you, if you ask Him for Jesus' sake, and will

son, like a good workman, thou sitting in thy house hast in rest obtained the kingdom of God: but I, like one without discretion have passed all my time in solitude and yet have not reached the measure of this word of thine.'"

[p] S. Matt. v. 8.

use it when it is given, by doing the little things which you have to do, so as to please Him.

What treasures lie around you, my brethren, if you knew it, treasures of the Infinite Love of God! They lie around you, as the dust under your feet or the blades of grass in the fields, or the straws on your path. You can gather treasures in heaven, more readily than the wealthiest or the cleverest could gather treasures on earth. For you have countless treasures at your command, countless, yea the infinite grace of God, wherewith to gather them. You need not labour more than you do, if you are diligent; you need not do harder things than you do; only whatever you do, pray, try, to do as shall please God. He is far more easily pleased than we are, more easily pleased than you yourselves are with any thing done for yourselves, so soon as it is past and the freshness of it is gone.

Give to God, when you wake in the morning, one strong earnest desire, that, in all the acts, thoughts, deeds of the day, you may please Him. Whatever you do, try from time to time, to do it, as well as you possibly can, to please Him. He is your Father; speak to Him. He loves you; what you want, ask of Him. In all things, by all things, you may grow in His love. All is lost, which is not in some way done for Him. Some things may be done out of the very habit of desiring to do what He wills. Some things are done expressly to please Him; some things are done with a faint wish to please Him; some with a strong desire; some with a struggle, because the wish to please ourselves interferes; some things easily, because we have long been used to desire in

this way to please God; and use, in God's grace, has made it easy to us. "[q] The night is far spent, the Day is at hand." God has given us this Advent, that we may the more think of His Second Coming, that we may anew prepare to meet Him. How shall we prepare? Not with great things, but by preparing our hearts, through His Grace, in all little or great, to please Him. If ye have aimed to please Him heretofore, aim the more to please Him now. So He says, "[r] The time is at hand; he that is righteous, let him be yet more righteous; and he that is holy, be yet more holy." Would you not wish this when He is come?

Picture Him to yourself come again to this earth. Picture to yourselves, this earth, the places where you work, or are employed, or pray, burned up, and this Church wherein we are, passed away, and nothing of earth left but yourselves, none before you, but your Judge, none between you and Him. What would you wish to have done then? Would you not wish *then*, that in all the years of your lives, in every action, every moment of them, you had pleased Him? Would you not wish that whatever ye had done, ye had done to Him, so as to please Him? Then, do it now. There is not an hour in the day, in which you may not love God; there is nothing wherein you may not grow in His love. You do not see the growth of your corn, yet you plant, and are sure of your future harvest. You who have children, do not see the growth of your children, yet day by day, as you feed them, you not only support their bodies now, but you know that, God willing,

[q] Rom. xiii. 12. [r] Rev. xxii. 11.

they will be full grown hereafter, that such is the way, whereby they will grow. So then, day by day, seek now to please God; whatever ye have already learned, whether it be diligence in your calling, or love or patience or alms, aim to do more perfectly; whatsoever ye have not yet learned, seek to learn, and you will find in the Great Day, that there is no one thought, word, deed of so slight account, but that if you did it to please God, He will have stored it up, to repay you in the everlasting fulness of His Joy.

SERMON XII.

SAINTLINESS OF CHRISTIANS.

Lev. xx. 26.

"*Ye shall be holy, unto Me, for I the Lord am Holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be Mine.*"

What are your thoughts of 'a saint,' my brethren? What do you picture him to yourselves? Something, doubtless, far above common Christians; something which you feel that you are not; which is far above you; about which you need not concern yourselves; which you need not aim to become, cannot hope to become; and yet are, through the mercy of God in Christ, quite safe and shall be saved. In heaven all must be saints. One thought, or faintest imagining of any thing other than the all-holy will of God, would mar the perfect beauty and bliss and peace of heaven. One wish, there, to be above another, although we were the very last and lowest there; one thought of jealousy, or selfishness, or rivalry there, would make heaven cease to be heaven. What then is this character of a saint, which qualities of his are they, without which we cannot be there, and about which we are to be so unconcerned here?

The saints, or holiest men of old, doubtless had

great power with God. They loved God's will and so He loved theirs, and did what they willed and asked Him. But is it then the power of working miracles, which makes a saint? "[a] Righteous Abel," as our Lord calls him, and Enoch; Noah and Abraham; John Baptist, of whom our Lord says, "[b] among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than" he, wrought no miracle. Is it then through hardness and austerities, such as John Baptist underwent, the clothing of hair-cloth, and the wild food of the desert? Christ, our Example, the Saint of saints, the Holy of holies, "[c] came eating and drinking: and they said, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Must it be that a person should have left all for love of God? "[d] Abraham was very rich in cattle, and in silver, and in gold." "[e] The Lord blessed him greatly, and He gave him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses." Job was "[f] perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil," before his trials came which gained him the praise of "patience," and "[g] God blessed his latter end more than his beginning." Is it then that a person must pass his whole life in prayer and worship of God, abstaining from all the pursuits and offices of this world? To pray without ceasing is in some way a Christian's duty, a Christian's life. But Joseph became a saint, as second only in Pharaoh's kingdom, and Moses, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and Daniel, as ruler over the whole province of Babylon;

[a] S. Matt. xxiii. 35. [b] Ib. xi. 11. [c] Ib. 19.
[d] Gen. xiii. 2. [e] Ib. xxiv. 35. [f] Job i. 1. [g] Ib. xlii. 12.

Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, as wise men at Babylon, nurtured in a king's court. Is it then through mighty knowledge of God, such as Daniel had, whose wisdom is as a proverb in the Word of God Himself, "[h] Behold thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee?" The High-priests observed of Peter and John, that they were "unlearned and ignorant men." Is it then power of preaching and zeal, as some think, to win others to the knowledge of God, and the love of Christ? Precious in our sight, as in God's, must be the souls of our brethren; but Abraham's teaching, which had the praise of God, was only within his family. "[i] I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement." Is it in labour and toil unceasing? What a peaceful, pure, simple life, was pious Isaac's.

And she, the blessed Saint, the great tidings to whom we remember this day[k], she, to whom, by taking our human flesh of her, our Lord entered into a closer nearness than to all created beings, she, in whose womb, which He had hallowed, our Lord vouchsafed to lie hid, and for ever to unite our poor human nature to His Godhead; what great things do we hear of her? Scripture tells us only in simple words, "the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, and the Virgin's name was Mary." And what thought she of herself? that God had "regarded the low estate of His handmaiden," "exalted those of low degree,"

[h] Ezek. xxviii. 3. [i] Gen. xviii. 19.

[k] Preached on the Feast of the Annunciation, at Hursley.

"filled the hungry with good things." Amid lowly poverty, such as may be the poorest among you, in patience, and meekness, and gentleness, and humility, and thoughtfulness, and simple piety, amid the lowly duties of a poor peasant girl, although of the royal line of David, was that chosen vessel formed, of whom, after 4000 years from the fall, our Redeemer willed to be born; "Man, of the substance of His Mother born in the world," as He was, "God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds." One decided act of blind, obedient faith, ready to believe what to human sight seemed impossible, to bear what might bring the world's shame, and she came into a closer nearness to our Lord than the highest Archangel or the Cherubim and Seraphim.

Is it then spotless purity, as far as human nature is capable of? Is it, as far as human infirmity permits, to have been ever faithful to God's grace, to have gone on ever from grace to grace and from strength to strength? Continual progress and faithfulness to God's light would seem to be the very conditions of enlarged grace and life and love. Yet what was the relapse of the "'man after God's own heart!" How was that saint who sat at our Lord's Feet and heard His words; 'last at the Cross and earliest at the grave;' she whose memory as a penitent, we love to cherish, and name the Churches of God after her name, how was she once a thing, from which people turn with loathing, a disgrace to her sex, which they cannot bear to think or speak of, except to loathe!

[1] 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

This very list of some few of those who, in all generations, have been saints of God, shews, my brethren, that the holiness of saints depends upon no outward condition, requires no special gift of nature or of Providence, of understanding or wisdom, nay! I may say, of grace. It need not be shewn in any one form; it does not require the largeness of any one grace; still less does it consist in austere sadness, or stern constraint, or rigid severity as to ourselves or others, except as to our sins. The blessed company of the redeemed saints have, and have not, found one road to heaven. One road they found, in that they were saved through One Redeemer, looking on to Him, and believing in Him, before He came, or looking to Him, when come. One way they had; for Christ was their Way. One way they had; because they "walked with God." God was present to them, in their thoughts, their acts, their going out, their coming in, their rising up, their lying down; they conversed with God; they went up and down with God; they looked to God; they were holpen and upheld by God. Their life was to please God. They took pleasure in God, and God had pleasure in them. But else all in their outward lot was different. Look at that goodly company, who sing the new song, "[m] redeemed to God" by the blood of Jesus, "out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." *There* are Patriarchs, and Apostles, and Evangelists, and Martyrs; but *there* are also kings and slaves; nobles, and base-born; rich and poor; learned and ignorant; captains, centurions, scribes, physicians, merchants, trades-

[m] Rev. v. 9.

men, mechanics; old and young: married and virgins; those who stood, and those who when fallen, were raised anew by Christ. *There* are they of every condition, age, sex, capacity, endowment; civilized, and "barbarians" who "[n] shewed no little kindness;" bond, who were bound also by the chain of Christ, and free, who were "[o] Christ's freemen;" that none may say, 'I am neglected of God; holiness was not made for such as me; enough for me that I gain my daily bread, labour for wife or child, fulfil my calling, in the sweat of my brow eat bread.' Look up then, behold thy Lord, the carpenter's son, and the Carpenter[p]; see S. Paul, who laboured with his own hands; "[q] Luke the beloved physician;" see the fishermen and the tentmaker, the gatherer of sycomore fruits[r] and the shepherds, Amos and Abel, Moses and David. They pleased God, and God chose them to be leaders and shepherds and prophets of His people. Labour then, whatever else thou doest, to please God, and He will teach thee to work miracles, not without, but within, in thyself, in that He will teach thee by His grace to do that which no power of nature can do,—subdue thyself. He will inspire thee, and will not inspire thee. He will not reveal to thee new truths, but He will reveal to thy soul the meaning of His word, to love it and keep it, and to do it. He will not teach thee to speak words, as they spoke who were full of the Holy Ghost, but He will give thee the Holy Ghost to dwell within thee. He will place thee, not on an earthly throne, but on an heavenly, as He saith,

[n] Acts xxviii. 2. [o] 1 Cor. vii. 22. [p] S. Mark vi. 3.
[q] Col. iv. 14. [r] Amos vii 14.

"[s] To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father on His Throne."

Holiness was made for all. It is the end, for which we were made; for which we were redeemed; for which God the Holy Ghost is sent down and "[t]shed abroad in the hearts" which will receive Him. God willed not to create us, as perfect. He willed that we, through His grace, should become perfect. But what He willed that we should be, *that*, if our will fail not, we must become. His Almighty Will vouchsafes to depend upon our's. We know not why our free-will is so precious in the Eyes of God, that He waits for us, pleads with us, draws us, allures us, wins us, overpowers us with His love; but He will not force us. But He made us to be like Him. And what is this, but holy? "Be ye holy, for I your God am holy." What God commands; what God wills; what God so willed, that He made us for this alone, that we should be holy, and being holy, should share His holiness and bliss; *that* must be within our reach, if we will.

"[u] Have we not all One Father? Hath not One God created us?" Are we not all redeemed by the Blood of One Redeemer? Hath not One Lord given One Holy Spirit to bind and knit in one communion and fellowship the whole Body of Christ? Did we not all in Baptism renounce, in the same words, the threefold enemies of our holiness and of our salvation, the flesh, the world and the devil? Was not the Name of the Holy Trinity named on us all, and were we not sealed by the one sign of the Cross, as

[s] Rev. iii. 21. [t] Rom. v. 5. [u] Mal. ii. 10.

the sheep of One Shepherd, the disciples of the Crucified? Do we not all belong to one Body? Have we not all had the gifts of One Spirit, "[x]even as we were called in one hope of our calling, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." But since we have all besides in common, One God, Who calls us; One Redeemer, Who shed His Blood for us; one Source of Grace, the Blood of Christ; One Giver of grace; one and the same channel of grace to our souls, the same Sacraments which flowed from One Lord's pierced Side; One Beginning, One End; how should we not be capable of one and the same gift of holiness, which is to be the way to that One End, our rest in the Bliss of God? Truly, we deify the things of man, and bring to nought the things of God. We idolize man, and dethrone God. We make man self-sufficient, and God powerless. Which do we hold to be the more powerful in itself, nature or grace? I ask not, which is mightiest in any of us? For we may so have shut out grace, so weakened grace in us, so weakened our own wills to use the grace of God, that grace may be powerless in any, because he has refused it so often, and now has no or only half a heart to use it. But I ask this; which is strongest for good, the powers of man, which God has by nature given him, or the Almighty Power of God? You would be ashamed, that I should ask you this. And yet, when you are tempted to think, that so much depends upon outward circumstances, upon a man's position in life, or his knowledge, wisdom,

[x] Eph. iv. 4—6.

talents, learning, leisure, whether he be holy or no, what else do you than think that these poor outward things are of most account to men's being holy, and the grace of God, of the least?

Were it the question of human learning, human wisdom, or wealth, or riches, or greatness, then, for the things of this world, you would have needed the talents, and helps, and appliances of this world. For the things of God you need but the help of God; the grace of God, to dispose your will; the grace of God, to strengthen your will; the grace of God, to perfect your will.

The mistake of mistakes is, to think that holiness consists in great or extraordinary things, beyond the reach of ordinary men. It has been well said, 'Holiness does not consist in doing uncommon things, but in doing common things uncommonly well.' Even in those great saints of God, the things which dazzle us most are not perhaps those which are the most precious in the sight of God. Great was the faith of Joshua, when he said, "[y]Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." God speaks of it, "[z]that there was no day before it, nor after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man." Yet nearer to the Heart of God were those words of his aged love; "[a]as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Great was Moses in the eyes of the Egyptians, when he brought the last plague upon them, and they intreated those whom they held captive, with presents to be gone. Greater was he in the eyes of God, as being "[b]very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the

[y] Josh. x. 12. [z] Ib. x. 14. [a] Ib. xxiv. 15. [b] Nu. xii. 3.

earth." Honoured by God was S. Stephen, when "[c] his face shone like the face of an angel," and "[d] none could resist the wisdom and power with which he spake." More likened to our Lord was he, when he prayed for his persecutors, "[e] Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." "[f] Great fear came upon all the Church, and the people magnified the Apostles," when Peter denounced God's judgement upon Ananias and Sapphira. Greater was the aged Apostle in the sight of God, when his Lord's words were fulfilled in him, "[g] When thou art old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." Great were the abundances of the revelations bestowed upon S. Paul; greater was it that for love of his Lord, he "died daily." And what was the glory of that "great clouds of witnesses," whereby, S. Paul says, "we are encompassed?" Nothing which they *did;* but that which they *endured* for love of God.

So too now. It is not by great things, but by great diligence in little every-day things, that thou canst shew great love for God, and become greatly holy, and a saint of God. Few ever do great things, and the few who can do them, can each do but few. But every one can study the will of God, and can give great diligence to know it, and to do what he knows. Every one can, by the grace of God, be faithful to what he knows. Your daily round of duty is your daily path to come nearer unto God[h].

What, one may ask, gain heaven by sweeping a

[c] Acts vi. 15. [d] Ib. vi. 10.
[e] Ib. vii. 60. [f] Ib. v. 11, 13. [g] S. John xxi. 18.
[h] Christian Year. Morning Hymn.

room, or teaching children, or ploughing, or sowing, or serving, or by mere works of one's hands? Yes! not by doing them, but, by the grace of God, doing them to God. But how can they be done to God, since they must be done? Truly, it were mere self-deceit to say, 'I will do this to God,' and then to do it just as before. But by great faithfulness in doing it aright; by doing it *exactly* as you believe that God wills; by keeping from all sin in doing it; by lifting up thy heart while doing it to God thy Father in Heaven, thou mayest be fitted for the fellowship of the holy Angels, those "ministers of His, who do His pleasure."

But then, you will say perhaps, 'This were, indeed, good easy tidings; this were a cheap way of getting to heaven.' Well! I believe, my brethren, that the ways of God *are* easy ways to those who will walk in them, and who know them; our Saviour's "yoke *is* easy, and His burden light." But is it then such an easy thing to do one's every day duties *very* faithfully? Easy it is by the grace of God; not easy, in the way of nature. Else why is it not done every where, my brethren? Why is it that a *very* faithful servant is so observed, and praised, and respected, and loved? Why is *very great* honesty in dealing, or in speech, or in truthfulness, or in service, or in faithfulness, so remarkable, if it did not cost self-denial, and require the diligent use of God's grace?

No! my brethren, it is easy and it is not easy. It is *not* easy to nature; it *is* easy to one who diligently uses the grace of God. All things become possible, all things become easy, to him who asks

for, and uses, the Almighty grace of God. Take but the same pains to gain heaven that you would to gain any earthly object you much care for, and you may become high in the kingdom of heaven. What patience will not people use, what endurance, what self-denial, to gain some worldly, yea, some devilish object! How will they "labour early and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness," day after day, and year after year, for some object which perishes in the using, if it will advance some end, on which their minds are deeply set! How will they put restraint upon themselves; bear hard words; endure rebuffs; overlook injuries; deny their appetites, that their minds may be clearer, or their bodies fitter for some worldly end. Fasting, watching, cold, weariness, painfulness, are not only borne, they are scarcely accounted of, for some earthly end. Men have their end so in view, that they scarcely feel for the time, pain, or hunger, or weariness; or they count it joy. And what does God ask of you? He asks not of you rigid fasts to wear your health, but He asks you to keep under your body, that its fulness hurry you not into sin. He bids you forgive one another, if there be such, who do you wrong, to love them for His sake Who bears with them as He has borne with you. He requires you to subdue your passions, to restrain your anger, to watch over all the motives and desires of your hearts, that you allow them in nothing which shall wound the conscience, or hurt your own or your neighbour's soul. He asks of you to be meek and patient, gentle and loving. He tells you to avoid occasions of sin. He would have you, for love of Him, allow yourselves

in nothing which you know or suspect may be against His All-holy Will. The better sort among the heathen longed to do all this. They saw the beauty, the goodness of it; but they could not do it, without the grace of Christ.

Slight and every day things they are. Slight and every day things they must be, whereby we must gain heaven, since "heaven is opened to all believers." Slight and every day things, since the race is for all alike. We differ here in rank and station; in wealth, or talents, or learning; and hard would it be for the poor, if the high places in heaven depended upon such things as these! They *do* depend, not on such baubles as these, but on that which is given to all alike, which is given, as we desire and long and ask for it, the 'love of God.' Yes! do these daily things, and forget not God, and you may be high in the kingdom of God, His chosen saints, friends of the Great King, the beloved of Him Who loved you and gave Himself for you. For He says, "[i] ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Forget Him! How can we bear, not always to remember *Him* Who never forgetteth us, but "daily loadeth us with His benefits?" How should we forget Him, Who in all His night-watches, labours, weariness, tears, sufferings, from His manger-birth to His Cross, remembered each one of us? How should we not remember Him "[k] above our chief-joy," Whose joy it was amidst His suffering, to see in those of us who are faithful, the fruits of "[l] the travail of His soul?" How should we not remember Him in our trials, Who toiled for us;

[i] S. John xv. 14. [k] Ps. cxxxvii. 6. [l] Isa. liii. 11.

or in our sufferings, since He suffered to sanctify ours?

Yet, only remember Him; avoid more than death itself what you know or suspect would grieve Him; seek daily to please Him; and while you know only your own infirmities and short-comings, God will form in you, amid your little daily self-denials, your little crosses, your little duties, the mind of His saints. He will brighten your souls by His grace; He will kindle you with His love; He will transform you by His Spirit; He will visit you with His Goodness; He, Who "[m] forgiveth all your sins," will "heal all your infirmities," that He may "crown you with His mercy and loving-kindness." Little things they are in the sight of man; little, through the sight of your infirmities, you will remain in your own eyes. But little as are the greatest of God's saints in themselves; hidden from the sight of men; not little, but more precious than all created things, is that for which and by which they become saints. Precious beyond all price is the Blood of Jesus, which He shed to make us saints. Precious, yea, infinite in value is the grace of His Holy Spirit, through Which He will sanctify us. He Himself tells us, that they are little things in us which He wills to reward with great things. "[n] Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; be thou ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

[m] Ps. ciii. 3, 4. [n] S. Matt. xxv. 21.

SERMON XIII.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

Rom. viii. 16, 17.

"*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.*"

We may then know, if we will, that not only were we once made God's children, but that by His mercy and grace, we are so now. Children of God we were all made. But sin makes men children of the devil, rather than of God. "[a] Ye are of your father the devil," says our Lord, "and the lusts of your father ye will do." "[b] In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." By the grace of God, we were made the children of God; by casting away that grace, men become the children of the Evil one; not by birth of him, but by doing his will and becoming like unto him.

Our whole peace of soul hangs on this, to which

[a] S. John viii. 44. [b] 1 S. John iii. 10.

of these we belong, to God or to Satan. We can have no real peace, except through a good hope, that we are the sons of God still. Those who have it not, make to themselves a false peace, by shutting the eyes of their conscience and blinding themselves, and stifling their souls, so that they may not think, that perhaps they do not belong to God, but to the Evil one. Whereby then may we know, that we are the children of God? Whereby does God the Holy Ghost bear witness to our spirit, that we are such?

Now, first, it is of the utmost moment to have this fixed in our souls, to whom God the Holy Ghost can *not* give this witness. For men deceive themselves often with a false peace. They look to their feelings, not to their prayers or to their acts which are the fruits of faith, and think that all is well with them, because, as they think, they rely on their Saviour, while they do not the things which He says.

It cannot be God then, Who speaks peace to the soul, when there is not true repentance for past sin, a strong purpose, by the grace of God, not to commit wilful sin. There cannot be any assured peace, when there has not been, for some time, power over deadly sin, and diligence in keeping God's commandments.

A loving sorrow for past sin must always be a part of all true turning to God. Sin is so hateful; it is so miserable to have forfeited the favour and love and grace of God, that the soul which comes to itself, must be miserable that it has been what it has been. Sorrow, for the love of God, that the soul

has offended God, is a far more hopeful sign of true turning to God, than even overflowing joy at the goodness of God Who spared it. It is more hopeful, because it is more humble. It reaches deep down by humility, to build on Him Who is the living Rock. It knows better the depth of hell from which it has been rescued, and so it knows better the depth of His mercy Who has rescued it.

But with this loving sorrow, there must, for any true peace, be a strong purpose, by the grace of God, to overcome all present temptations. Habitual grace is the Presence of God in the soul. But God will not abide in the soul which wilfully chooses what God hates. "[c] Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin," i.e. so long as a man abides in his heavenly birth, he doth not wilfully and knowingly give way and entrance to sin, "[d] for His seed abideth in him." The grace of God, which is the seed of his heavenly birth, the source of all good in him, the germ of future glory, abides in him; "and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." So long as he alloweth the grace of God, the heavenly seed, to work in him, he cannot but do what that grace suggesteth; he cannot do what that grace forbiddeth. "[e] How should I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" This is a great sign of friendship with God. It is a great sign on the part of God, from Whom Alone that grace can come, which keepeth the soul from sin. It is a sign that man has received and used that grace, and that the grace of God abides in him.

Would you then know whether the grace of God

[c] 1 S. John iii. 9. [d] Ib. [e] Gen. xxxix. 9.

abides in you, look into yourself; look into the book of conscience. Examine your life; examine your love. If you are God's, you will love the things of God, the will of God, the commands of God. Look not to the one or the other, but to all. Our Lord says, "[f] If ye love Me, keep My commandments," not, Keep the one and break the other, but keep all. He who is born of God, doth not commit sin; he doth not abstain from one and indulge in the other, but he doth not wilfully commit any sin. Look then well, my brethren, if you would know of yourselves, whether you have in you the abiding presence of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the grace of Christ. Look to the sins of the flesh and the sins of the spirit; not to coarse grosser sins only, but to the finer, delicate sins: and look, not whether you fall by human weakness (for there is no man who sinneth not) but whether you cherish any one thing against the All-holy Will of God. Look hard into your own conscience; look, as desiring that God would shew you the truth; look, whether you faintly suspect any thing to be wrong; whether there be any thing, with which you would be unwilling at this moment to stand before the Judgement seat of Christ. You know what are the deeds of the flesh; what is hardness or wrong to others; whether you return evil for evil; whether you think or speak well of yourselves and ill of others; whether you forgive wrongs or inflict them; whether you have charity, which is the bond of perfectness, and humility, the guardian of all grace. If you indeed love God with your whole hearts, and your neighbour as yourself, prizing their

[f] S. John xiv. 15.

good as if it were your own, desiring good for them as for yourself, and feeling for their evil, as members of the same body, then you may indeed believe that the love of God has been shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit dwelling in you.

For this strength, by nature you cannot have. What by nature is impossible, becomes possible through grace. If then indeed the deeds of the flesh are mortified in you; if you rule your natural desires and impulses and the longings of the flesh, and allow them not to rule you; if you find that you hate sin and long with no vain longing to be conformed to the mind of Christ; this is a certain token of the grace of Christ in you. For what by nature you cannot have, you can have only by grace. "[g] Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of His Son." He did not predestinate to eternal life simply; He predestinated to be conformed, i. e. to be formed after, the image and likeness of the Son. He willed that, as He is a Son by nature, so we should be by grace; He willed that we should become like Him, not in glory only, but first by grace; that He should be the pattern of our life in grace, as He is its inworker in us; that we, His adopted sons, should bear a likeness to the Son; that He Who is made to us Righteousness and Wisdom and Sanctification and Redemption, should make us, His redeemed, righteous and wise and holy; and that our holiness, love, patience, humility, and each grace in us, should be after the pattern which He shewed us.

This is the first test given us by our Article, "[h] if

[g] Rom. viii. 29. [h] Art. xvii.

we feel the Spirit of Christ within us, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members;" and the second is like to it, "and drawing up our mind to high and heavenly desires." This two-fold working there must ever be. For we must either be stretching onward, or we shall be sinking back. If we are stretching on, then we must be stretching on through His Grace alone, by Whom we must be upheld in order to hold on. If we are stretching on, it is by obeying the suggestions of His grace within us.

For they are not motions or emotions from time to time, which can be any proof to us of God's Holy Spirit abiding in us. Such motions or emotions may be calls to the soul towards God. They shew that God has not forsaken the soul. They shew that God is still pleading with it, "[i] Why will ye die? As I live, I have no pleasure in him that dieth. Wherefore turn ye from your sins, and live ye." But steadily to obey such motions, never to turn aside from them, to be glad to listen to them, often to hear them, and as often to obey them, this is the gift of God's abiding Spirit. Then have we the Spirit of the Son in our hearts, when we obey as sons. Then have we the love of God, when we love what God loves, hate what God hates; when we hate with an earnest hatred all remains of sin in us; when we love, for the love of Christ, all those whom Christ loves. Then have we the love of God, when we gladly hear His voice. Then we know that God owns us as sons, when we feel His Fatherly Guidance over us, checking us, withholding us, calling

[i] Ezek. xviii. 31, 32.

us, directing us, keeping us from deadly sin. Then we hope that He Who, in His undeserved love, is keeping us now, will keep us unto the end.

And so, not through any reasoning of our own, not, commonly, by any revelation of God, but by being at peace with God, we have and feel peace in ourselves. God works peace in our souls indirectly, if we obey Him. Conscience is at peace, for we know that we cherish nothing which God hates. We have peace with God; for we believe in Him and hope in Him and with our whole hearts we love Him. We have peace in ourselves; for although the flesh wars against the spirit, though it murmurs against us, it is held down by the strength of God within us. We have peace as to our past sins; for we hate them, and wish with our whole hearts, for the love of Jesus, that we had not done them, and hope that they are blotted out in His most precious Blood. We have peace as to all persons; for the love of God rules in our hearts. We have peace as to all things; for all is in our loving Father's Hands.

And then, when the soul speaks to God, it feels itself from time to time lifted up towards God, lifted up above itself, panting, longing, for that heavenly light, for its home in heaven. Grace is as the star which leads the soul to Christ. And as the soul speaks to God, and dwells in God, it joys in God. And its joy in God is not from itself. Not in words spoken to the ear, not in thoughts formed in the heart, does God often speak to the soul. But the soul, bedewed with inward sorrow for its past sins, knows that its sorrow is not from itself but from God. Its firm purpose to live to God alone, from

whom should it be, but from Him from Whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed? Then is the conscience at peace, not from ignorance of itself, but from knowing itself; and "[k]if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God."

And what confidence? That God has loved us, and loveth us; that whatever good is in us, is from Him, the Author of all good; that since there is some good in us, from Him is it. And as the soul glories in God and loves God, its peace is increased; and the more the soul serves God, the more it loves Him, and the more it glories in Him, the deeper is its peace and rest and joy.

Peace is not our end, my brethren, but holiness and the service of God, and the love of God, and union with God, of which peace is the fruit. Seek not peace then for itself; but seek God, seek Jesus Who is our Peace. If ye seek to find peace for yourselves, you may be deceived by a false peace. If you surrender your whole selves to God, if you give up to Him every desire out of Him, if you long to be, to have, all and only that, which God willeth you to be and to have; if with a whole heart you desire to be His, and that He should be your God, then you will have some earnest and foretaste of that heavenly joy. Then in the joy of that self-surrender, weak and faint though it be, you will have, in some degree, the witness of God that you are His, Who has given you the desire to be His. And as you become more and more His, as you are more faithful to His warnings in your conscience, as you obey

[k] 1 S. John iii. 21.

Him more, serve Him more, miss no whispers of His within you, 'do this, keep yourself from that,' the witness will become clearer to you. As the life of our bodies is known by the acts of the body, as the life of our minds is known by the exercise of our minds, so the life of grace is known by good works and keeping God's commandments. Acts according to God, are the proof of the love of God within us. When the Holy Spirit makes us ready and active in obeying God, then It bears witness to us, that we are the sons of God. Sons of God we are through His adopting grace, and heirs; but of what? Not heirs only of future bliss; not heirs of any thing which the heart could or could not conceive, out of God, although given by God; but heirs of God. Our inheritance and our eternal joy, and our portion in the land of the living is God Himself, as it is said, "[l] The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." "[m] When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it." God Himself is our everlasting inheritance, wholly contained by none, but given wholly to each; given, as we are enlarged to receive Him by the cleansing of our souls, by faith, by love, by holiness, by humility, by obedience which He has given us, and which we have received from Him. "[n] Heirs are we of God and joint-heirs with Christ," heirs, to enter into the same joy into which our Saviour Christ is gone before; heirs, through grace, of that which belongs to Him by right, but which He has gained, not for Himself only but for us too, that we might be partakers of His Divine joy. Yet the Apostle adds one condition, "[o] if so be that we suffer

[l] Ps. xvi. 5. [m] Ib. xvii. 16. [n] Rom. viii. 17. [o] Ib.

with Him, that we may also be glorified together." For as Christ bore His Cross for us, we must through His strength bear ours after Him. 'There should be no greater comfort,' our Church teaches us, 'to Christian persons, than to be made like unto Christ, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. For He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain; He entered not into His Glory before He was crucified.'

For the end is, that we may be also glorified with Him, Who is in the Glory of the Father, as He prayed for us, "[p] Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

[p] S. John xvii. 24.

SERMON XIV.

BENEFIT OF TEMPTATIONS.

S. James i. 2, 3.

"*My Brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience.*"

Our Lord teaches us to pray, "[a] Lead us not into temptation." How then, can the Apostle tell us to count it a joy to fall into them? And not only joy, but "all joy?" "Count it all joy," the highest joy, the sum of joy, gathering into this one joy all the manifold sources of joy.

But of what temptations, think you, my brethren, was the Apostle speaking? For this may give us the meaning. Did he mean, think you, that Christians were to count it all joy, if any were tempted to do all sorts of things which the flesh likes to do; to live softly; to eat and drink intemperately; to be indolent; or to follow a brutal and degraded nature and its lusts and appetites, and be like the beasts which perish? Or do you think, again, that he meant to teach us, that we were to "count it all joy," if we were tempted to think much of ourselves; to

[a] S. Matt. vi. 13.

boast of ourselves; or to appear well before men, like the hypocrites; to count ourselves that we are righteous and despise others; to desire to be higher in the world, than we are; or to deck ourselves out in this world's fleeting vanities? In a word, my brethren, do you think that the Apostle meant that we were to "count it all joy," when we were tempted to the things which are pleasurable to our fleshly appetites, our senses, our pride, but which displease God?

Even these temptations may be turned to good by the overpowering grace of God, because every trial, in which, by His Grace, we stand, and wherein we give not the least consent to any thought which is against the Holy Will of God, does bring us larger grace and greater favour of God. By the grace of God we prevail against them, and "grace well used draws more grace." But out of *such* temptations it is a joy to have passed; it is a joy, by God's grace to be conquerors. But there is no joy to fall into them; because, even apart from the issue, whether we conquer or are conquered, there is the separate peril whether, by a momentary consent, we displease God. But these were not the special temptations of the early disciples of our Lord. Of them the Heathen who hated them, could only say; "[b] He is a good man; only he is a Christian." The Heathen hated and despised them as fools, because they were so unlike themselves; they could find no fault with them, save that they were Christians. They themselves bore witness, "[c] See how these Christians love one another." Nor again do we seem to need God's

[b] Tert. Apol. c. 3. p. 8. Oxf. Tr. [c] Ib. c. 39. p. 82.

word to bid us joy in, what we are, by our corrupt natures, too much inclined to joy in,—ourselves; in which if any joy, he is in great peril of falling; nay, unless his joy be some special gift of God, he has already fallen, through the pride mingled in his joy.

What were then the temptations, into which the early Christians were chiefly exposed to fall, into which the Apostle bids them "count it all joy" to fall? S. Paul recounts them, where he speaks of those things which, by the grace of Christ, shall not separate from the love of Christ. "[c] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." S. Paul exults, and his heart seems to bound with joy, as he recounts these things, which he might endure for the love of Christ. He fulfils beforehand that, to which S. James exhorts. Tribulations rend not from the love of Christ; for, the Apostle says, "[d] we glory in tribulations:" nor "distress," for the largeness of the love of Christ enfolds and absorbs it: nor "famine," for Christ is his Food: nor "nakedness;" for Christ too was stripped upon the Cross, to clothe us anew with the best robe: "nor peril, nor sword;" for what could a Christian fear, to whom to be dissolved is to be with Christ? The sword or the cross or the flames but severed them from this world to unite them to Him Who loved them, and Whom their souls loved.

[c] Rom. viii. 35—37. [d] Ib. v. 3.

S. James, then, too bids us chiefly to count it all joy, when we meet with trials, not which we like, but which are contrary and hard to flesh and blood. This is a teaching, learned from the Cross of Christ; this is a wisdom, which the wise of this world knew not of; a wisdom above this world, because its truth lies beyond this world, in that eternal kingdom of the love of God, into which, S. Paul says, we must, through much tribulation, enter.

But why then are we to count such temptations as these, joy? Why is it to be a joy to have to forego what flesh and blood desire, to endure what flesh and blood shrink from?

First, (which contains all) it is a token of the love of God. It is a badge of our sonship, an earnest of our future inheritance. "[e] Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth," S. Paul says, "and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." To be exempt then from scourges, would be to be exempt from the number of His sons. To be without trial would be, to be neglected by God. To have trial, is a proof that God is thinking of us, caring for us, giving us something which may approve us to Him. Why Almighty God permits our life to be beset with trials, we shall not, if we are wise, ask. Why He does, He will explain to us, if we attain, in Heaven. To wish yourself to be without trouble, would be to wish to be free from *that*, to which He subjected the Son of His Love. It is not the happy lot to have few troubles. The greatest friends of God had most and the heaviest. The happiest lot is, to receive in peace, whether more or fewer, what God permits, and by His grace

[e] Heb. xii. 6.

to endure, and to be more than conquerors through Christ that loved us; strengthened by our very conflicts, proof against temptations through temptations; abounding in grace through the victories of grace, cleaving close to God by overcoming that which would separate us from Him.

Then, suffering likens us to Christ; it is a portion of the Cross of Christ. Delicate followers of Christ should we be, if we wished here to have only joy, where He had only suffering; to joy here with the world, hereafter to joy and reign with Christ. The nails which pierce us, have passed through the Hands and Feet of our Lord, and nail us with Him to His Cross.

From His Birth in the Manger until His Atoning Death upon the Cross, all was suffering, within, without; in soul, in body; through His own disciples, and through enemies; from the insolent temptation of His fallen Angel whom He had made; from the blasphemies of men whom He came to redeem; from the faithlessness of those who owned Him; from the thanklessness of those who disowned Him; from that inward desolation, which He allowed to come on His Human Nature, and the forsaking by the Father. Find any suffering, save sin, which thy Saviour bore not for thee, and then complain! Nay, rather, complain unto Himself, Thy Saviour; and He Who bare the suffering for thee, will, by His All-Holy, All-Hallowing Sufferings, sanctify thine.

Then, trouble bursts the bonds of this life, and shews us the nothingness of all created things. God touches a man there, where He best knows, and all of this life is as ashes. The fire of God falls, and

the garden of Eden becomes a desolate wilderness. But blessed that wilderness, where God speaks to the heart, where the soul finds God, and in Him finds all which it lost, stored up, although out of sight, shining the brighter through His love.

Trouble drives the soul into itself, teaches it to know itself and its own weakness, rouses it when torpid, humbles it when it lifts itself up, strengthens the inner man, softens the heart, cuts off offences, guards virtues.

Yet not only are those severer troubles channels of God's grace to the soul, but even temptation itself, when the soul hates it, purifies it. Then only is temptation dangerous, when it is pleasant. Then flee it, as worse than a serpent, for it threatens thy soul's life. Then pray against it, flee the little pleasant beginnings of it; the thoughts, with which it begins; the places where it meets you. Avoid loneliness, if thy temptation be in loneliness; avoid the company, where it haunts you. "[f] Look not at the wine when it is red, when it gives its colour aright." If beauty mislead you, think of the beauty of the undying soul in grace, and how fouler than all foulness is the defilement of sin. To cherish a thought which, even distantly, brings in thoughts of sin, is itself sin. Wilfully to begin an act, which thou knowest by experience to end in sin, is, in will, to commit the sin itself. If thou art angered, to go into the presence of him with whom thou art angry, is to will to be angry. To place thyself in prayer in the posture, in which sleep has before come over thee, is to choose to sleep rather than to pray, and to despise God.

[f] Prov. xxiii. 31.

The Apostle speaks not of temptations which we run into, temptations which we seek out for ourselves or make for ourselves, temptations which we tamper with; but temptations into which, by God's providence, we fall. Guard against temptations of thine own seeking; and temptations which come in the way of duty, or of necessity, or charity, or to prevent greater evil, or to gain greater good, will not hurt thee. Be on thy guard against temptations: and over temptations, against which thou canst not guard, God will guard thee. Kindle not the fire to thyself, and if in the way of duty, thou walk, as it were, through the fire, God will be with thee, and the fire shall curl round thee, as it did around the three Children, and shall not hurt thee. The least, if thou court it and invite it into thyself, may destroy thy life; out of the greatest, God, if thou seek Him, will make a way of escape; not a mere escape, but out of it, aloft from it, over it; He will lift thee over it, that thou shouldest rise the higher out of the very temptation from which thou emergest, and not escape only, but go, march forth triumphantly through His love and grace Who has loved us. For this, the very faith and truth of God are pledged to us, that, if we will, we shall prevail. "[g] God is faithful," (it was read to us just now,) "Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."

In this way too, David's words come true, "[h] It is better to fall into the hands of the Lord than into the hands of man." The trials which God sends, as sorrow, losses, bereavement, sickness, are always directly to our profit, if we do not waste them. Temp-

[g] 1 Cor. x. 13. [h] 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

tations, which come from Satan, or the world, or our own evil desires, tend, in themselves, directly to evil. Yet even these too, if through the grace of God we yield not to them, but labour to uproot them, may by His mercy be the occasion of manifold profit and of growth in grace. No sin can be without thy will: keep, by the strength of God, thy will firm, and the Evil one cannot touch thee. It is not the mere rising of a feeling of envy, or jealousy, or dislike, or anger, which brings thee into sin. If thou hate them, they may, by God's grace, rather turn to thy profit. God can overrule the very thought of sin, if against thy will, to make thee hate the sin. Turn quickly from it, and turn to God, and thou hast escaped it and art nearer to God.

God, by such temptations, teaches thee to know thyself, to humble thyself, to despise thyself, to cleave to Him. In strife with temptation only canst thou know thyself. "[i] The unrest of temptation sifts whether a man, when in rest, truly loves God." Temptation shews us how weak we are to resist the very slightest assaults. We see in our own weakness, how any good in us (if there be good) is not of us but of God.

And so temptation, if we are wise, makes us more watchful. Slighter temptation is either the way into, or the way out of, greater. Slighter temptations, if yielded to, prove a broad and high way which leads to greater, and, but for God's mercy, to destruction and death: slighter temptations, if resisted, open the eyes to the peril of greater. Or again a great sudden temptation has revealed to the soul the danger of tampering with less.

[i] S. Greg.

And so temptation drives us to Him Who hath said, "[j] Call upon Me in the time of trouble, so will I deliver thee, and thou shalt praise Me." "[k] The Lord is my Light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?" When untried, or with very ordinary trials, the soul is wont to relax itself, to rely upon itself. It asks God, in a sort of general way for help; it owns, as a truth of faith, that without God it can do nothing. It thinks that it believes what it says. It believes that it trusts in God, because it can repeat what it has been taught; and, if asked, would say readily what Holy Scripture teaches. But if we really look for any one's help, do we forget him, do we think of every thing more than of him? Should we act without regard to him? Should we be in the midst of perils, and not look whether he is near us? And yet we are in daily, hourly, peril. We are doing ill or well every day. In thought or speech, if not in deed, we are, continually wellnigh, in danger of displeasing God. Every day is leading us one way or the other, nearer to God or further away from Him. And yet who, wellnigh, of the mass of Christians thinks, that it is with God's help alone, that he shall refrain from saying this vain, or conceited, or angry, or otherwise wrong word? or that God alone can give him power to check his thoughts from roving on forbidden things, or that God will help him, if he asks Him? And so some sudden greater temptation takes a man off his guard, opens his eyes to himself: he finds that, if saved from falling, his footsteps were well-nigh slipped; but therewith it reveals to him, that he had been

[j] Ps. l. 15. [k] Ib. xxvii. 1.

leaning on himself, not on God. The sudden peril, which is too great for him, scares him from depending upon himself, and makes him betake himself in need to Him Whom before he confessed in word and name only. Temptation quickens trust and hope and prayer.

But therewith temptation brings to us His Presence Whom we seek, to help, guard, strengthen, comfort the soul. "[l]I will be with him in trouble;" saith God. "[m]I will be unto him a wall of fire round about." "[n]My strength is made perfect in weakness." The depth of trouble calls deeply. The deep earnest cry is answered. The longing of the soul is the Presence of Christ. He Who gives the grace to cry to Him, wills to hear. God hearkens to the voice of a man. "I am with him." The Lord of heaven and earth is present with His creature, as if, in all heaven and earth, there were none but it. Trouble is the very earnest of the Presence of God, if we will it; for He says, "[o]He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able."

And with the nearer presence of God to the soul come larger gifts of grace and more joyous hope of pleasing God. Experience has made it a Christian Proverb, "God gives no grace to man, except upon trouble." In victory over temptation God gives a holy fervour. He makes the soul to taste and see, that it is sweeter far for His sake to forego what the soul desireth, than against His Will to have it. No conqueror of this earth so longed for greater conquests, or a new world to conquer; no one who

[l] Ps. xci. 14. [m] Zech. ii. 5.
[n] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [o] 1 Cor. x. 13.

loved this world or aught which it contains, so longed for that which he loved, as the soul which has tasted the sweetness of the love of God, longs for that, whereby it may be approved to God. Trials and temptations well-borne are the earnests of salvation. He Who giveth the trial or temptation willeth to crown. When thou art tempted, thou knowest that He willeth to crown thee. Satan assaults those most, whom he knows most to deny his power, and renounce himself. The fierceness of his assaults may, by God's grace, be to thee a token of the greater victory.

Then, after or in temptation God will give thee consolation. As when on earth our Lord called His disciples to rest awhile, He will, after a while, if thou hold out, give thee rest, or else by the very trial He shields thee from some greater trial.

And what will the end be? Our Lord Himself tells thee, "[p]Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Every temptation resisted by the grace of God, is a jewel in the heavenly crown. God leaves unrewarded no one struggle, borne manfully in trust in Him, for love of Him.

Weary not, then, when thou art tempted; be not impatient, that thou art tempted; be not vexed with thyself that the temptation is such to thee, and lose not courage. It is the very temptation of all temptations, to think our temptations too hard for us. We are tempted to think, 'if my temptation were any but this, I should succeed.' We think lightly of others' trials, heavily of our own. And yet thus, one by one, every human trial is thought heavy,

[p] Rev. ii. 10.

every human trial is thought light. Both cannot be right; and yet, in a way, both are right. Every trial is, in itself, heavy, too heavy for us; every trial may become light, by the grace of God. In what we think of our own trials, we feel our own weakness; in what we think of others' trials, we see what *ought* to be the issue of all trials by the grace of God.

Look not to the temptation alone, but look to the end. What says the Apostle, 'Blessed are ye, to be free from temptation?' No, but "[q] Blessed is the man that *endureth* temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." He Himself will crown in thee His own gifts. He Himself will crown thee with life, life blessed, eternal, glorious, full of light and peace, of sweetness and delight, of joy and gladness, of good and love unspeakable; because it shall be full of Himself.

[q] S. Jam. i. 12.

SERMON XV.

CHRIST'S ACTS OF LOVE, THE CHRISTIAN'S MODEL.

EPH. v. 1.

"*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us, as an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.*"

"FOLLOWERS of GOD!" Copy Almighty God! Is this, can this be, true? Almighty God is Infinite; and all His Perfections are Infinite. His Perfections are all one with Himself. He is All-Goodness, All-Wisdom, All-Holiness, All-Justice, All-Love. He is Almighty; He Alone IS. And we, what are we? The creatures of His Hand. Else, we are narrow in our minds, weak in our wills, very bounded in our knowledge, shortsighted as to our own good, mastered by our passions and infirmities, blinded by our desires; unwilling to see what we *will* not to do, unwilling to do what we see, unequal to do what we will. It is hard for us to copy some good man, who is higher than most of his fellows. We do not attempt mostly even this; and would you set before us, you may say, to copy the Infinite Perfection of the Infinite God?

Nay, not I, my brethren. It is God Who says to you, 'Be ye followers of God." It is our Lord, our Redeemer, our God, Who says to you, "[a]Be ye perfect, as your Father, Which is in Heaven, is perfect." But it is not to us, such as we by nature are, that our Good Lord bids this. He bids us, as children of God by grace, who can by His Almighty grace do what He bids us; "Follow thou Me."

But wherein should we follow Thee, Lord? Man mostly follows God in a perverted way. He would imitate God, where God is inimitable, and not imitate God where God has formed man to imitate Him. He would follow God, where God wills not, and not follow God, where He wills. He would admire God where he ought to imitate Him; and imitate Him where, out of the depth of his own nothingness, he ought only to admire and adore Him. Man would imitate God in His Greatness, which he cannot; and does not imitate Him in His Goodness, which, by God's grace, he can. God Alone, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost sufficeth for Himself, and needeth nothing out of Himself. God Alone is, within Himself, His own Bliss. God Alone perfectly knoweth Himself, and all things, and all beings. God Alone is the Fountain of all Good. God Alone made all things, and preserveth all things in being, which He hath made. In these things man would idly and sinfully follow God. Man would be independent of God, as God is independent of all things, since all depend on Him. Man would form his own happiness for Himself apart from the law, the will, the Mind of God, and find his bliss in his own way, and

[a] S. Matt. v. 48.

be himself his own end, his god; as God is all things to Himself. Man again would know all things, even what ought to be, (he thinks, God forgive it!) the Mind of God, what God ought to do, will, make, appoint, judge, reveal, although "[b]none knoweth the Mind of God save the Spirit of God." Man would judge the secrets of the heart, and pronounce on the inmost thoughts of the heart, although God only knoweth the heart, Who made it. Man would find all perfection in himself. He would be to himself his own rule of right, of goodness, of justice, and he would reject, or overlook, or ignore, or explain away God's law; although One Alone can be the Fountain of all right, Who is alone the Fountain of all being.

And while man would thus, apart from God, be what God alone can be, he neglects to become what, through God, he may be. God, of His Goodness, promises us His Likeness, the sharing of His Glory, His Bliss, His Knowledge, His Joy; if but in this life, by His Grace, we follow, afar off, His Goodness. Man would have, now, greatness, happiness, knowledge, glory, joy of his own, apart from God's Goodness; and he will not seek that goodness, which God will give His redeemed and His children, if they ask Him, and will, with His Spirit, give them all things, be all things to them.

Yes! God made us for no other end than to be like Him; and, being like Him, to love Him and to enjoy Him, and to be filled with His love, and His bliss, which is His Love. He made us not in the image of any of the heavenly Host, of Cherubim or

[b] 1 Cor. ii. 11.

Seraphim. He formed us not in the likeness of the most perfect beings which His Infinite Mind conceived. He would not have us stop short in any creature. "[c] Let us," He said to the Eternal Son, "make man in Our Image, after Our Likeness." "So God made man in His own Image: in the Image of God created He him." And when Adam's sin, and the manifold intensified sin of man had marred, and cankered, and eaten out, the Divine Image, in no other Image would He re-create us, than in that, in which He created us, the Image of God. "[d] The new man is created *after God*," according to God, after the image of God, "in righteousness and true holiness." "[e] Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren." Christ, the Son of God by nature, is the mould, after which all we Christians, God's adopted sons, are to be cast. His Holiness, Love, Goodness, Humility, Tenderness, Zeal, Patience, are to be the types and patterns of the holiness, love, goodness, humility, tenderness, zeal, patience, to be wrought in us. Nor yet is it enough for His condescension, to re-create His grace in us, and our souls, by God the Holy Ghost, in grace, as an act of Almighty power, re-creating us, and changing us from evil to good. He willed to re-form each separate grace in us, line by line, Himself, but through ourselves; Himself evermore supplying His grace, and we, in each act, using it. He retraces that Image in us through the infusion of His grace, while we, using that grace, copy that Divine pattern.

[c] Gen. i. 26. [d] Eph. iv. 24. [e] Rom. viii. 29.

"[f] We all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." That is, "We all," who are Christ's, with the inner eyes of our soul freed from that veil, which hindered those who were blinded from beholding Christ, "beholding as in a glass,"—really yet not fully, as man can in this life, not as we shall see, face to Face,— "the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same" glorious "Image" which we behold, "from" lesser grace and "glory to" greater and larger grace and "glory," and that by the continual inworking of God the Holy Ghost, "even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

By beholding God, in His Glory, hereafter face to Face, we shall be made like Him in Glory. By beholding our Lord now on earth in His Holiness and His Love, we shall be transformed into some likeness of His Love and Holiness. Never shall we know what grace or love or holiness is, while we hold back from what Scripture sets before us, copying that Pattern shewn to us on Mount Calvary. Hence is it, that we sink down into such listless, careless selves, veiling our sloth and our faithlessness under pleas of humility and faith; and, like Ahaz, saying, "[g] I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord."

God the Son took our Flesh, in order that, in it, He Who in Himself could not suffer, might suffer for us; that in it He Who could not die, as God, might, as Man, die for us. He took our flesh, in order to bring us to that unspeakable oneness with Himself, that He, our Creator, should take for ever this our created nature on Himself. But, besides all

[f] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [g] Is. vii. 12.

this, He took our flesh, that, in it, He might go up and down among us; that in it He might be seen by us; that in it He might speak to us, and leave deeds and words, which might, in characters of love, be traced in our souls, and there live on for ever. He came among us, in order to set before us in His own Divine Person, the loveliness and beauty and majesty of Divine Love and Divine Holiness. We cannot see God in Himself here. And so God veiled His Majesty and tempered His Greatness, and came among us in our littleness, "God with us." Yet His Divine Love was as full and entire on earth in that Form which was despised and rejected of men, was spat upon, was marred, was buffeted, as in His Highest Glory, adored by the Seraphim Who are enkindled by it. For He is one and the Same God. He came as Man among us, not only to redeem us, to die for us, to hallow our nature, to teach us, to enlighten us, to be our Advocate with the Father with the Wounds which for us He bore, to be our merciful Judge in that very Human Form which was crucified for us, but to be our Pattern of Divine Love and Goodness and Holiness for us to copy. And what should we copy? Truly the life of Christ is the whole sum of the Christian's life. Whatever holiness the Holy Spirit has wrought in any of the saints of Christ was wrought after that pattern. By meditating on that life, we live with Him, converse with Him, enter into His holy and Hallowing Society; we sit at His Feet; we hear His words; we anticipate our home in heaven, our Angel-life, when we shall, through His Spirit, cleave to Him, adore Him, and through adoring love be conformed to

Him. Through studying Him, we know how to follow Him; through following Him, we understand what we study. And so, by a continual round, the contemplation of Him kindles our souls to long to be like Him and to copy Him; to copy Him, enlightens our eyes, and does away the film which dims their sight; and that light, through His Spirit, transforms our spirits into the likeness of Him Whom we behold.

And *now*[h] what should we so behold, so adore, so copy, as the love of Jesus, in act, in word, in thought? He Himself preaches it to us from His pulpit, the Cross. "[i] This is My commandment, that ye love one another, *as* I have loved you." The Apostle reinforces it, "be ye followers of God, as dear children." 'God,' he would say, 'has loved you. He has made you children to Himself, accepted and beloved in the Beloved. As beloved children, become ye like to your Father Who has loved you; all who have good fathers and love them, long to be like them.' "And walk in love;" do not love in imaginings, cozening yourselves with beautiful pictures of what you would do, but do not; congratulating yourselves, what burdens you would bear so cheerfully in others' places, while you touch them not in your own; nor again, following a faint, fitful, impulsive, and so capricious feeling; setting first this way, then that; contradicting itself, and so condemning itself; alternately rejecting its good and its evil, what it does and what it neglects to do. But "walk in love." Let love be your daily action, your daily life; let it follow your steps; let it be the

[h] Preached in Passion-tide. [i] S. John xv. 12.

atmosphere in which you move; let it ever surround you, accompany you; persevere in it. But with what love are we to be so encompassed, that it is to be the inseparable companion of our steps? "[j] As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, as an offering and sacrifice to God."

Christ then reserved nothing from us, but gave all for us. He reserved not His Glory; for He emptied Himself of that Glory which He had with the Father before the world was. He withheld not His toils; for He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil; and so wasted was His Bodily Frame with His Ministry, that He seemed nigh fifty years old, when He had not passed thirty three years of this world's life. He guarded not His reputation; for He was called in derision, "[k] the friend of publicans and sinners," because He so loved poor sinners. His meat was to do His Father's will, and to finish His work; yet because He went in to eat with sinners, for love of them, they called Him "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber." He retained not outward happiness, "[l] for He was a man of sorrows and an acquaintance of grief." He looked not for thankfulness; for the close of three years and a half of self-denying love, was, (as He ever knew that it would be) "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" "Not this man, but Barabbas." He shrank not from being dependent on others; for He Who had all things in His Power, lived, together with His disciples, on the alms of a few women. He had not what the very brute creation, the foxes and the birds of the air have, and what to man is the great solace of toil, a home.

[j] Eph. v. 2. [k] S. Matt. xi. 19. [l] Is. liii. 3.

"[m] The Son of man had not where to lay His Head." Man, however outcast, seldom meets with personal indignities. *He* hid not His "face from shame and spitting." His martyrs have died for Him amid the love of those who loved Him and them, and 'nowise' it was said by one who had undergone it, '[n] did this body feel, when the mind was in heaven.' He withdrew from His Human Nature the consolations of His Divine, that He might feel to the full desolation of suffering, the weight of the world's sin, the displeasure of the Father at sin upon Himself, the Sinless, the Beloved Son in Whom He was well-pleased. He Himself conquered in His Martyrs, and never was He so near them, as in the suffering which they bore for Him. He Himself was made a curse for us. Glory, Riches, Honour, Rest, Happiness, Independence, Home, Reputation, for love of us, He counted nothing. For Glory He took shame, for Riches an outcast life; for the Form of God, the form of a servant; for the adoration of the Heavenly Host, the jeering of the coarse multitude, the mockeries of the soldiers, the sanctimonious blasphemies

[m] S. Matt. viii. 20.

[n] 'Our Bishop alone having suffered, this was shewn me as if I asked Cyprian himself whether the suffering of those blows gave pain; i.e. being about to be a Martyr myself, I enquired about the endurance of the Passion; he answered me, 'Other doth the flesh suffer when the mind is in heaven: nowise doth the body feel this when the whole mind hath devoted itself to God.' Words of a Martyr encouraging a Martyr! He denied that there was pain in the blow of the Passion, that he who had also to be slain might be animated more stedfastly in that in the blow of the Passion he had not to fear even a slight sense of pain.' Ruinart Acta Mart. (Acta S. Montani n. 21.) p. 241. Flavian, who relates this vision was one of the Martyrs who wrote the Acts, all but the close. The rest is by an eye and ear witness.

of the priests. He merited for His disciples "abundance of consolation" by the abundance of His desolations. His, "°My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," won for them, that they should never be forsaken, that they need never think themselves forsaken.

And for whom did He this? For those who crucified Him, for those who forsook Him, for him who denied Him, for those who were blaspheming Him and shaking their heads at Him, who mocked His sufferings and derided Him, and for the soldier who pierced Him. This was little for His love, for they knew not what they did. He underwent all this for those who should, in after times, know all His love, and yet be ungrateful; who should know what torment He endured, and yet crucify Him again; who should know that He, their God, became Man to save them from their sins, and yet love their sins more than their Redeemer; who should know that He came to break Satan's yoke from off them, and yet choose His rebel creature's hard yoke rather than His own easy loving, peaceful service. He saw, one by one, every sin, whereby His Holy Name should be polluted in those who should bear it. He saw in His Infinite Mind, one by one, that almost countless number of adulterers, fornicators, drunkards, extortioners, voluptuous, covetous, liars, talebearers, oppressors of the poor, selfish, hard-hearted, through whom He should be blasphemed. He knew all those who should be such, but over whom His grace would prevail, and they should be converted and live. And yet for all and each of these, Jesus,

° Ps. xxii. 1.

all His life long, bore all those Sufferings: for these He foresaw and in foresight fore-endured the Sufferings which He willed afterwards to bear: for these He was crucified: for these He was as one forsaken of the Father: for these He underwent the Agony in which His whole Body wept tears of Blood: for these He died the Death of shame and was made a curse for us, and hung upon the cursed Tree.

And from that Tree, lifted up between heaven and earth, to draw us to Himself, thence with mangled Form, and thorn-crowned Head, and furrowed Side, and cheeks livid with the blows, and riven Hands and Feet, and dislocated bones and anguished heart, thence does Jesus, the Joy of Angels, the Sun of Righteousness, the world's Creator and Redeemer, thence does He, hidden, marred, unloved, unadored, the Glory of His Godhead undiscernible, the Beauty of His Manhood undiscerned, thence, if we have hearts, does He speak to our hearts, "[p] A new commandment do I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

"*As* I have loved you." It might well occupy our souls for all eternity, it will be the employment of the blessed in eternity, to think out the meaning of those great words, "*as* I have loved you," and never find their end, never be nearer to their end, but with unending, unwearied search, to trace out His unending, unbounded, unwearied love. But although His "*As* I have loved you" has no bounds in the compass of His love, it does give us a rule as to the mode of our love.

[p] S. John xiii. 34.

Our love must be supernatural. Above nature is its source, for it flows from the Infinite Love of our Lord and God; above nature in its might, because, if it be from Christ at all, it must be Divine not human, not our poor, bare human love, but love poured out into our souls by His Holy Spirit Which He hath given to us.

Our love must be self-sacrificing. Love, which is not self-sacrificing, can have no likeness to the love of that Sacrifice, offered by Divine love for us upon the Cross; that love, "*as* Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us as an Offering and Sacrifice to God." Whoso sacrifices not self to love, must sacrifice love to self.

Our love must, in their degrees, embrace all whom Christ loves. To love those who love us, is the love of those who are alien from the faith. Our God need not have become Man and died for us, to teach us such love as this. Mere natural love will indeed, without grace, readily turn to hatred. But love which stops short in these, is and must be mere natural love. It has no root, no growth, no fixedness, nothing Divine.

Our love must not be deterred by that which is repugnant to nature. We must not love or be indifferent to evil, but we must love the evil. For what were we, when Christ loved us? Love which loves only what is not repugnant, may be taste, refinement, sentiment, impulse, perception of what is fair or fitting. It cannot be Divine love. We may amuse ourselves with such phantoms and golden skies, and airy fabrics of love. But in the Great Day, we shall find them unreal, unsubstantial, base-

less, as castles in the air, the vain creation of a fevered brain. Had Christ tarried to redeem us, until we were worthy for Him to give His life for us, did He now wait to give us grace, until we had some merits of our own; did He require, to shew mercy upon us, any thing but the, to Him, touching sight of our loathsome misery, where had we been, where should we be? Where alone we deserved, in Hell.

Away then with this delicate, nice, refined, mock charity, so scrupulous lest its gifts should be wasted, when we have so wasted the gifts and graces of Almighty God! Away with such a charity, which passes by on the other side, shocked at the putrifying wounds of sins; the very likeness of ourselves, when our Good Lord, the Good Samaritan, came down from heaven to be Himself an outcast, but to bring us home!

Our love must roll round others, not ourselves. "[q] Charity seeketh not her own." Our Dear Lord sought nothing for Himself, but gave all for us. We must not seek our own, even in charity. We must have no stronger, closer interest than love. Love must be our very being, as it was the being of our Lord. Else, if there be any interest nearer, more allied to our souls than love, whereever that interest comes in, it will seize upon our souls, and love will be let go.

Our love must be active, persevering. "[r] Jesus, having loved His own which were in the world, loved them unto the end." Unless Jesus loved us unto the end, and gave us perseverance in love unto our last hour, through the temptation of Satan we should

[q] 1 Cor. xiii. 5. [r] S. John xiii. 1.

fall from grace and love and from Jesus. Whither, but into the pit?

Charity does not ask the same things of all of us, but she speaks to all of us in the Name of Jesus. What she demands of us, as to word and thought, I will, God willing, speak in the next evenings. Of Apostles and Martyrs she asked mostly their lives. "[s]Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." The death of Martyrs was new life to the Church. Of Evangelists and Missionaries, she demanded their toils; of Confessors, their sufferings; of the rich, their abundance; of the devoted, their prayers and intercessions; of teachers, their zeal for souls; of the poor, the cup of cold water in the Name of Jesus.

And now, Charity speaks to us, 'I dwelt in the Heart of Jesus; I straitened Him, when He said, "[t]I have a Baptism to be baptised with," a Baptism of His Blood, "and how am I straitened until it be accomplished," until He could find vent for His love in dying for you. I burned within Him, when He said, "[u]I thirst" for your salvation. As I was with Him, He willed that I should be with you. "Love one another, as I have loved you." What do ye for me, what do ye for the love of Jesus?'

What do we? Truly, my brethren, I would I knew what to answer; but I know not. May God give you what to answer, when Jesus, your Judge, shall ask each of you in the Great Day! Wealth we all see, abundantly in this great city; goodly houses, rich equipages, shops filled and crammed

[s] 1 S. John iii. 16. [t] S. Luke xii. 50. [u] S. John xix. 28.

with luxuries, all things to tempt the eye, to please the taste. Zeal for getting wealth we see. It marks and sharpens the countenance; often it furrows it untimely. Zeal for pleasure we hear and see unceasingly. Night has no stillness. Our streets echo with the sounds of those going to and fro in search of it. The brilliant way-marks in the corners of our else dark streets are the palaces for the drunken. Zeal for honour, thirst for self-interest, every one, as the Prophet reproached his people ripening for their destruction, from the first to the last, turning to his "[x]own way, to his own gain." All this we are full of. Self-interest is the life of our enterprises, the nerve of our commerce, the main-spring of our inventions, the soul of our activity, the idol of our worship: would we may not have to say, the dæmon-author of our greatness! But where is charity? Is this or that hospital, 'supported,' we are told, 'by voluntary contributions,' but yet more by the piety of past generations, while the sick and hungry are wasting by thousands in their desolate habitations? Are some small weekly contributions at God's altar, which are as a drop of water cast in to quench a conflagration? Are a few schools, here and there, while the streets swarm with children ignorant of their Redeemer's Name? Is a slight dole, here and there, amid thousands given for luxury, when strong men would pawn[y] themselves, if they could, for their children's bread, and mothers long for the hour, when

[x] Is. lvi. 11.

[y] 'I would pawn myself for bread for my children, if I could,' was the expression of an honest laborious man in the East of London. After the severe winter of 1878, the Superior of the Sisters of Charity in Spital-fields found the same history in every

their children's wasted forms shall be quite dissolved, and agonize their sight no more? Are a few Scripture readers, here and there, to tell people of a Gospel, which people bind splendidly, set up in its place, like a dumb idol, but whose words of love who obey? Is this then our charity? Are these the fruits of Divine love? Is this to love one another, *as* Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us? One may see, as one walks along the streets, countenances marked by care or by carelessness, by indifference, by stupidity, by hardness, by self-indulgence, by self-satisfaction. Where does one see a countenance, in which Divine love shines as sensibly and as sweetly, as all these human passions furrow or stamp or bloat their votaries? But then where is charity? Neglected poor, children sunk in ignorance and sin; youth unguarded, a million of people left in the compass of this metropolis, as benighted as if they were living in central Africa, where Christ's name was never named; women whose wages are pared down below the means of subsistence, to make room for the luxuries of the wealthy; Christians, as much forgotten by Christians as if we did not bear the name of our common Saviour:—all these answer, in one varied wail, prolonged and swelling in dissonant sounds of misery through the courts and alleys of these miles of human habitation, 'Where? We have not heard its name; we have not felt its fruits; we have been hungry, and it gave us no meat; we have been naked, and it clothed us not; we have been sick and in

house which she visited; every thing which could be pawned was pawned for their children's bread. Yet these were hard-working men, who worked whenever they could obtain work.

prison, and it visited us not; we lay in the darkness of the shadow of death, and mercy shone not on us, regarded us not.' But what shall we say then, when Christ our Judge, shall say to us, "Where is thy brother?" "[z] The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground."

Never shall we know charity, until we study it in the Face of Jesus, beholding Him, meditating on Him, studying Him, copying, as we may, the pattern which He shewed us on the Mount of Calvary. He, Very God, came down from Heaven and took our Flesh, that He might temper His Glory, and that we might, with undazzled eye, gaze on His Perfections, and read His Love, and cherish it in our souls, and think when some sacrifice is required of us, 'What did Jesus?' When tempted to selfishness, selfish luxury or selfish pleasures, or self-interests, or selfish idleness, or selfish thoughtlessness, recall to thyself, 'Thus did not Jesus. Not thus canst thou follow Jesus.' O, were the love of Jesus in our souls, as 'salvation through Christ alone' is rightly in our mouths; did zeal for those, for whom Christ died, glow in our souls, as zeal against those, for whom He yet died, kindles hot passions and fiery indignation; did the Word of God live in our hearts, as the name of the Bible lives in our lips; were God's words not heard only but obeyed, not known only, but loved, not professed but kept, how might this wide wilderness of souls become, as He promised, a garden of the Lord! How might Christ live and reign here, instead of Satan, Jesus be adored instead of Mammon, the Lord be their Shepherd, instead of death!

[z] Gen. iv. 10.

In vain. The world around thee will go on to greater ungodliness, to deeper corruption, to colder unbelief, to narrower selfishness, until God's judgements fall on this great Babylon. "[a]Come out of her," says God, not with your feet, but in your affections, "lest, partaking of her sins, ye receive of her plagues." Jesus shewed thee on Mount Tabor some of that Glory of God, which for us He bestowed on our poor human nature; on Mount Calvary He became for thee "a worm and no man, a scorn of men and an outcast of the people." Put not off with fair words Him Who loved thee in deeds. If thou wouldest reign with Him, crucify thy selfishness, that His love may reign in thee; go forth out of thyself, that thou mayest find Jesus; be the love of Christ, not self-love, the centre of thy being, around which thy affections roll: seek to glorify, not thyself, but Christ: do for the poor whom He hath left with thee in His stead what thou canst: in deed and in sincerity of heart lend unto Him Who gave Himself for thee, that, when heaven and earth shall melt away, He may say to thee, "Thou hast done it unto Me."

[a] Rev. xviii. 4.

SERMON XVI.

CHRIST'S WORDS OF LOVE, THE REPROOF OF DETRACTION.

S. Luke iv. 22.

"*And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.*"

The Words of our Blessed Lord are words from the Eternal Word. They are the outward form of His Divine thoughts. They convey to us whatever of those thoughts it has pleased God should be embodied for us in time. They explain and apply His Acts. They are the outward voice in which His Acts speak, as His Acts are the fulfilment of His words of grace. They have been the food and life of all holy souls. The Holy Ghost brought them to the remembrance of the Apostles who heard them; and so remembered, they were a groundwork of their faith, the instruction of their understanding, the enlightening of their minds, the substance of their teaching, applied and enlarged by the operation of God the Holy Ghost. As uttered by Him, they sped like arrows to the hearts of those who would receive them, wounding them only to heal them, healing them when wounded, slaying them to themselves, that they might live to Him.

At one word of Jesus, the Publican became the Apostle and Evangelist, the historian of the words which he heard. The rude servants of the Pharisees, who had not shrunk from the office of laying hands on Jesus, turned back, converted. They had been sent, they had gone, to take a man. They turned back, for they felt that they were in a Divine Presence, "[a] Never man spake like this Man." They feared not the wrath, nor the contempt of the Pharisees. The words of Jesus had spoken to their souls. They allege, not fear from the multitude, but awe of Himself. 'Never did man so speak.' When He ended His sermon on the Mount, the whole multitude which had waited on Him breathless, were astonished, amazed, at His doctrine: "For He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes spake as from beneath; He from above: they, as explainers or perverters of the law; He as the Lawgiver, delivering, in words of majesty and power and piercing force, the law of love. But when He preached to sinners out of the Prophet Esaias, "[b] The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," what wondrous words must they have been in the Saviour's Mouth! The eyes were all fastened upon Him, as He began to unfold the wondrous theme of all which heart of man can need. Good tidings to every form of human woes, the poor and outcast,

[a] S. John vii. 46. [b] S. Luke iv. 18, 19.

the broken in heart, the captives to sin and Satan, the blinded through error ignorance and vice, bruised and crushed through their intolerable slavery. And what tidings? Healing, deliverance, enlightening, freedom, acceptance and acceptableness with our God. And when He closed, all bare witness to Him, what wondrous gracious words and words of grace He spake; words which proceeded from grace, words which spake of grace, words replete with grace, words which bestowed grace. And such words are our pattern, my brethren; for He would have us too speak words of grace, for the use of edifying; words which, through the power of His Spirit, may "[c] minister grace to them that hear them."

Our Lord's words were full of grace, because they were full of love. They were full of Divine Love, a Saviour's Love, and drew to His Love. What words of love they were, from the "[d] Blessed are they who mourn; for they shall be comforted;" "[e] Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you," unto those solemn tender words, uttered for us now upon the Cross, when He thirsted for our salvation; when He was, as it were, forsaken, that we might never be forsaken; when He prayed for forgiveness for our ignorances; when He promised us, with the dying Robber, to be with Him in the joys of Paradise; when He commended us with His own Spirit into His Father's Hands.

My brethren, would that I might speak only of words of love, love like our Saviour's, gentle, soothing words to comfort the mourner; words of sympa-

[c] Eph. iv. 29. [d] S. Matt. v. 4. [e] Ib. xi. 28.

thy with the sinner, of tenderness to those astray, of loving warning to those about to wander, of instruction to the ignorant, of burning love to reclaim those who forget God and their own souls, and life and death eternal. 'So,' says a father[f], 'should our tongue be the tongue of Christ, if in speaking, teaching, rebuking, we imitate the meekness and gentleness of Christ.'

But Holy Scripture says, "[g] Cease to do evil; learn to do well." Such is the order of our recovery. We cannot make real progress in good, unless with a strong hand we uproot the evil. You wish, I am sure, to be full of love, my brethren. Ye come here to learn of love, to imitate your Saviour's love. Ye doubt not, perhaps, most of you, that you *do* love, if not God as He ought to be loved, yet man, as ye should love him. Ye doubt not mostly, that ye "are in charity with all men." And yet there is one wide, wasting evil, destructive of love; repeated, countless times; which no man scarcely regards; about which few consciences are troubled; which troubles but very little those who are at all concerned about it; and which yet God's Word strictly forbids; of which God says that it judges at once man and the law of God. "[h] Speak not evil, one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law."

Think not then, brethren, that, at this solemn season, I am going to speak to you of a mere every day duty, unworthy of it. God Himself tells us that in the Great Day, "[i] by thy words thou shalt

[f] S. Chrys. [g] Is. i. 16, 17. [h] S. James iv. 11. [i] S. Matt. xii. 37.

be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." God Himself sets forth to you in this, the example of thy Saviour Christ, "[k] Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." He spake not evil, even while suffering evil; and herein, God says, "[l] He left us an example, that we should follow His steps." How are we following His steps, if we speak evil, not only when suffering it, but unprovoked? If we follow not His steps, how are we His disciples? If we were His disciples, we should "love one another." We cannot at one and the same time love one another, and speak evil of one another. Love is the mark of Christ's sheep. If we love not, if we act unlovingly, on which side shall we be on that aweful Day?

S. James is amazed at it, as against nature and one of the deepest aggravations of the sinfulness of sinful speaking, that the tongue which was made to bless God, a harp to make sweet melody to Him, should also utter evil against God's image, man. Nature is true to itself; man alone is untrue. The fig-tree and vine yield their proper fruits. The fountain sends forth one and the same stream, sweet or bitter. Man's tongue alone would fain send forth both, sweet praises and blessings to God, bitter and hard and unloving words of men. But can it? And if it cannot, which is real? The love to God, or the unlove to man? God Himself tells us, "[m] If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain." He says, "seems to be religious." The unloving words, which

[k] 1 S. Pet. ii. 23. [l] Ib. 21. [m] S. James i. 26.

pass so lightly by man's ear, so soon spoken, so little thought of, so quickly forgotten, are real. The religion which makes such outward shew, which strikes the eyes of others, which deceives the man himself, is but "seeming" and "vain." He is speaking of one who means to be religious, who "blesses God," who spends time in the worship of God, who has an outward service, who seemeth to himself and to others a true worshipper of God, nay devout; devout enough to impose upon himself and his own conscience. But it is all, God says, "seeming" and "vain."

But what a word "vain" is, my brethren, when it relates to eternity! Such an one, S. James saith, "seemeth" to be "[n]religious," a worshipper, a servant of God; he seemed to be on the side of God, what men would call 'a religious man.' He must have been without overt offences, free from what would shock men; else they could not have thought him devout. There was nothing to undeceive them; nor does the man himself deceive them, otherwise than he deceives himself. He means to serve God. He is punctual, habitual in his religious observances. God's word says thus much. It speaks of the seeming habits of his mind; his character, as we should say; what "seems" the expression or impress of his mind. This is, to be 'devout[o].' He must have gone on for years in such a course. Any break would have been fatal to his "seeming" to be devout. And this habitual seeming service of his life, God pronounces to be "vain." He is not supposed to be a hypocrite; he is sincere, so far as he knows; for he himself is deceived about himself; he is re-

[n] S. James i. 26. [o] θρῆσκος

gular, decent; it would be his very habit to be outwardly reverential; he would delight to draw near unto God; he would attend daily worship, be a regular communicant. For all this comes into his character of seeming, and as *he* thinks, real worship of God.

And yet if, after years of this seeming service, if in the midst of any year of this continual worship, if on any of these days in his way to or from Church or the very Altar, his day of trial should be closed, and himself brought before the Judgement-seat of God, unless in that moment of service, or communion, or death, his soul had been changed, all his religion and worship and service would have been vain. One habitual sin against love would have eaten out the life of his devotion. His lamp would not be kindled with the oil of charity. He would have laid up nothing for eternity. All would have been empty, void, vain, profitless. He would sleep his sleep, and in the Awakening find nothing.

And yet the Apostle speaks not of any notable offences of the tongue. He does not speak of blasphemy, or false swearing, or lying, or misleading the innocent to evil, or relaxing people's sense of right or duty, or encouraging them in ways of overt sin. He speaks simply of *not* bridling the tongue, of letting it have its way, not checking, not restraining it. And this chiefly, because the tongue, left to itself, murders charity, destroys justice, and so offends against the very Essence of God, Which is Love, and by corroding the love of man, chases from the soul the real love of God. It contradicts our Lord's dying prayer for us, that we should be one

in Him and in the Father; "[p]as We," saith He, "are One." It breaks His dying command, "[q]This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." It violates His Sacrament, whereby He would, in a way above nature, bind us into one, "[r]for we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one Bread."

And yet this sin is well-nigh universal. It pervades all sorts and conditions of men; old or young; coarse or refined; dull or talented; idle or busy; objectless or absorbed in their objects; frivolous or concentrated; haters of God and religion, or partizans and, as they think, religious; sectarians or Churchmen; the careless or those who suppose that they examine their consciences. It pervades all times, all places, all societies. It puts on all disguises; it cloaks itself under any plea. It will claim to be innocent, because it is in jest, for mere amusement. It will be righteous, because it is very earnest in its denunciations. It will be quite harmless, because it is confided stealthily to one at once, to creep on from him to others. It will cease to be detraction at all, because its facts are notorious, and so it needs no secrecy, and is told openly. It means no harm, and therefore, it is said, it can have no harm. If the subject be in itself little, the littleness is its plea; if it be a great one, the greatness is its justification. A slighting remark or hard blame of one of little account can mostly do him no harm, unless it be said to the very few with whom he is concerned, and so it is to be no harm to speak slightingly of the poor; against the great, or wealthy, or

[p] S. John xvii. 11. [q] Ib. xv. 12. [r] 1 Cor. x. 17.

noble, still less can it do outward harm, so this also can be no harm. The shaft of an evil word shot at an individual is not likely to hit him, and so it is to be harmless. A whole class is seemingly invulnerable, and so a random word against them is to be also harmless. One thing only one wonders at, amid all these excuses,—why Almighty God forbade evil speaking at all; or, if none of this is the evil speaking which God forbids, what *is?*

Yet Holy Scripture is very full, within and without, of denunciation against this sin. How does S. Paul speaks of it among the sins, to which God gave the most benighted heathen over, as part of a reprobate or undistinguishing mind! "[s] As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, (or malice,) full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters (or speakers against others), haters of God." How does he again denounce the judgements of God against it! "[t] Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers," nor those guilty of other horrible nameless sins, "nor thieves nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Who of us would have thought to find "evil-speaking," amid such dreadful company? Who well nigh could bring himself to think, that a sin so common, so little thought of, so soon over, so repeated, would, alone, unless repented of, shut out one guilty of it from heaven for ever? Who well-nigh can bring

[s] Rom. i. 28—30. [t] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

himself to think it, guilt? Whose conscience ever smote him for it? Who greatly repents of it? Who scarcely attempts to repair it? Truly, the Judgement-seat of Christ is far stricter, the holiness of God far more aweful, the justice of God far more terrible, than even *they* think of, who do think at all.

Evil-speaking, which God condemns, involves much besides. There is malice in all evil-speaking; yet it is not only to speak with conscious malice. There is falsehood in most evil-speaking; yet it is not at all to speak with conscious falsehood. There is vain-glory, exalting self, despising others, in most evil-speaking; yet evil-speaking has not its guiltiness from any of these things. Pride, envy, swell it up, waft it on, spread it from mouth to mouth; these aggravate its guilt, but its guilt is not in them. It has its own guilt without them. Its guilt is, that, in every form and shape and degree, it is a sin against love; and a sin against love is a sin against that which Almighty God, in His very Nature, Is and loves.

What then God strictly forbids to do, as against His love and His own Being, is to speak any words against another, in any way casting slight upon another, unless thou canst say to God, looking, as it were, in the Face of Jesus, 'To Thy Glory, Lord, I do this; I do it for love of my brother, and, in him, for love of Thee.' If in this thou art true to thyself, if thou dost not first deceive thyself, if thou canst say to thyself, not, 'I *may* do this' but 'I *must* do this[u],'

[u] One very self-observant had said to me, 'I used to ask myself, *May* I say this ill of my neighbour? and I *always* found a reason for it. Now I ask myself, *Must* I say this? and I *never*

'love for my brother's soul hath constrained me to do this,' then, if thy words are true, thou art safe. Thou hast taken on thyself a perilous office, 'the accuser of thy brother.' It is an aweful thing to take on us the same office, which *he* uses, who is on this ground called by God's word, Diabolos, devil, "[x] the Accuser of our brethren, which accused them before our God, day and night." He too, alas, full often accuses truly; he, when the unhappy soul which has served him, parts from the body, accuses it too truly of all its sins, its ingratitude to God, its neglect or contempt of His laws, its selfishness and unlovingness to its brethren, its deeper guilt; and his cause is, in this, pronounced to be more just than theirs. They are adjudged to him, and are condemned with him. He dares to accuse those also, who overcome him by the Blood of the Lamb. Us too, my brethren, he will in many things accuse truly; and our only safety from him in that Day, will be in that Atoning Blood which, if we truly repent and believe in Jesus, shall in that Day cleanse away our sins. It is then an aweful thing, to take upon us an office, which is exercised by him, the Enemy of our salvation, the hater of God and man, from which *he* is named, who is the enemy of all love. If thou dost purely for love of God what Satan doth in hatred of God and man, thou wilt stand excused when thou art judged. But for this too *he* will implead thee, who now would give to

find a reason for it.' Yet the rule is obvious. Since God has said, 'speak not evil,' it must be a duty not to speak it, unless His law of love makes it, on any special occasion, a duty to speak it.

[x] Rev. xii. 10.

thee, as to the Jews, false excuses for doing it, which in that Day he will arraign.

But the true real pure love of God alone can excuse that, which, unless done out of the love of God, is done against it. It is not enough that there be no outstanding motive of unlove, which thou must thyself at once see. It is not enough that thou canst not see in thyself pride or unloving levity, or hatred, or envy, or malice, or jealousy, or contempt, or some petty grudge, or some mislike. Evil-speaking in itself springs from a deep, hidden fountain of unlove, gushing forth from the corruption of the human heart. Why is it, that we hear every where more of men's evil deeds than of their good? Alas, there are more evil deeds to be heard of than good, and the good deeds are calmer, stiller, less exciting, mostly than the evil. But why then has human nature mostly more pleasure in hearing of stirring evil than of calm good? Why, when there is both good and evil around us, is it perhaps the one sin or fault that we hear of? Why is society so full of the evil and of scandal? Why does it spread so rapidly? Why is it heard so readily? Why, when heard, is it repeated so quickly? Why do men like to be beforehand with one another, who shall tell this new-born evil first? Why would it throw a damp on society and make it seem dull and stupid, if every man were to see as plainly before his eyes, as it stands written in God's Book, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren?" Why would it check so many rising words, so many pointed sayings, so much refined sarcasm, so much dull censure, if this one rule were enforced? We are brothers, mem-

bers of one redeeming Lord, children of one Father, heirs of one Heaven, where the joy of one will be the joy of all, the glory of one will be the gladness of all, even of those who have a lesser glory. How is it then that here men *can* rejoice in telling *that* of one another, which will, at the best, minish that eternal glory, and be a shame to them in the Great Day? All this would not be, unless there were a secret pleasure in evil, unless it were natural to our corruption, unless, in the abasement of our neighbour, we thought ourselves in some way exalted. So far then from thinking thyself safe from evil in evil-speaking as people think, because thou art not conscious to thyself of some marked evil motive in thee, be sure that, unless thou knowest distinctly that thou dost it for good, the hidden motive within thee is evil.

In this too thou mayest see that all evil-speaking is, in truth, contrary to love, that human nature itself would not bear one to speak evil of him, from whom he had received some great benefit. True, it is ungrateful. But why is it ungrateful, except that it is unloving, returning evil for good? Were it a good, one should do it the more towards one who had shewn one love; were it indifferent, it were indifferent as to him too. But then thou ownest it to be in itself an evil; for, unless it were altogether an evil, it would not be a great evil towards any.

So too we feel that it is a great impiety and contrary to nature itself, if a child speaks evil of its parent, or the parent of the child, or the married of one another. Why, but that it is in itself an evil?

Why, again, do we not hear of evil-speaking mostly among those who are bound together by some strong religious or civil interest, unless some private individual interest interferes with the general law? Why, but that evil-speaking is counted to break the bonds even of human alliance, human community?

Why, again, do even Heathen proverbs bid us respect the memories of the dead, and '[y]speak only good of them,' but for some secret unconscious sense, that in speaking evil of them we are transgressing the bounds of our being, and carrying our unlove into the Presence of their Judge.

Why, again, does heathen friendship proscribe the man, who gnaws or backbites his absent friend, or defends him not against another's blame[z]? Why does shame so mount in the cheeks, if one is detected by him whom he backbites, and have professed any friendship for him? Why do the courtesies of human society require so often, that evil be said finely and delicately, ushered in with excuses, or with professions of reluctance, that one would not speak of it unless it were notorious, or that he is well-meaning, of whom we say it? Why is "[a]a *but* of detraction" "[a]he would praise him, howbeit, not without a *but*" a very proverb, unless men knew and felt that to speak evil is a deed of shame, and needs a

[y] 'De mortuis nil sine bonum.'

[z] Absentem qui rodit amicum, Qui non defendit, alio culpante, —hic niger est; hunc tu, Romane, caveto. Horace, Sat. i. 4. 81—85.

[a] Quoted, the first from Feltham's Resolves, c. 50, the second from Holland's Pliny, xxxv. 10. by Richardson, Eng. Dict. v. *But.*

veil wherewith to mantle it, that men see it not in its hideousness?

In so many ways, my brethren, does nature itself teach us, that it is an evil thing to speak evil. We see it ourselves in open patent cases; we hide it from ourselves in our own case, by pleading that it is not untrue, nor malicious; that one means no ill; that one bears no ill-will; as though this lifeless, inactive, dull, negative thing, which only *means* no ill while it does it and spreads it, were *that* love, which our Dear Lord came to bring to us by His Life and Passion and Death for us!

No! Rather we may see the true features of this evil-speaking, in that it allies itself so readily to all these passions, that we are obliged to clear ourselves to ourselves, that we are not guilty of them.

But is it then so certain that in evil-speaking men are not guilty of untruth? On the contrary, a man need be a very wary evil-speaker, who would not circulate untruth. Heathen proverbs again help us. '[b] Fame,' they say, 'is a liar,' detracting, adding, changing from the truth. Yet such is the witness which we believe against our brethren; for whose sayings we pledge ourselves; to which we give the stamp of our character; neglecting often what we might know, and giving vent to what we do not know, curious as to evil, incurious as to truth. Men are notoriously credulous of evil, if they mislike, and yet we readily believe their sayings. Our memories are strangely inaccurate, yet we trust the memory of any one, to report accurately as to his neighbour's evil. Men exaggerate unconsciously

[b] Tert. Apol. c. 7.

whether for good or evil, yet no one mistrusts their exaggerations; or, if they mistrust them at all, they will say that they believe only half of what they hear, while they repeat the whole. As if, when the whole may be untrue, they were full and over-flowing with charity, because they believed only the half of the evil which is said against a brother! As if, when they themselves attest their belief that there *may* be exaggeration, *may* be untruth, they were not bearing witness against themselves, in that they spread abroad that, which they own may be partially untrue. Doubt does not excuse sin; it condemns.

And yet large as this evil is, no one seemingly repents. For no one seriously sets himself to repair the evil. We have heard in our time countless evil spoken of others. Who scarcely was at the pains to tell any of us, that what they said was mistaken? And yet thus how was the evil repaired? and if none attempt to repair it, how do they repent? and if they do not repent, how will they be forgiven? If any man steals his neighbour's money, or cheats or defrauds him, you know that it is part of his repentance to restore, if he any how can, what he has stolen or defrauded. His repentance is not true, unless he is at pains to do it. But money is to most of us of no value, compared to our reputation. Reputation too we must be willing to sacrifice for the love of Jesus. But whoso robs us of our good name, robs us of more, than he who robs us of any outward thing. Our poet of nature tells it us, in the name of human nature. How then do men repent, if they never attempt to undo the scandal and evil which their tongues have done?

My brethren, I fear that, in the Day of Judgement, evil, censorious unloving words will be of far different account than even good men think here. Other wrong deeds, at most, hurt others' souls only by evil example. Most other sins have something seemingly revolting in them. He who speaks an evil word, may, in one word, as far as in him lies, slay countless souls. At once he may slay three souls by destroying love in all, his own, him *to* whom, and him of whom he says it. He sets rolling that which he cannot stop. The word once uttered cannot be brought back. You would count him a murderer, who from a height let loose the fragment of a rock, which should bound on and on and fall among a multitude, although he knew not whom it would crush. Yet even thus, the evil word let loose may slay love in the hearts of all who hear it, and on and on in all whom it reaches, and in whose hearts it finds consent. Other actions end in themselves. This cannot be checked. All other wrongs, well-nigh, except tempting to evil, can be repaired. Of this, even if any attempt it, not one thousandth part can often be repaired. Evil flies on eagles' wings. It cannot be recalled. They who hear the evil, do not hear the contradiction, limping after it. The more refined it is, the more mischievous, and the more irremediable. One clever word against a body of men will live on and be repeated as a proverb. It may destroy charity, indispose men's souls to truth, injure godliness, hinder works to God's glory or man's salvation.

But the guilt of evil words is not with those only who speak them. Evil may be spoken even with-

out words. Words express the meaning of our minds; and so far, whatever conveys an evil thought of the heart, is an evil word. We do not utter our meaning only through our spoken words. Words are not vocal only. Not only a half-uttered word, but a look, a tone of voice, a gesture, a shake of the head, may speak evil more expressively than any spoken word.

Then, also, whoso listens to evil is an accomplice in it. Human law adjudges that the receiver is as guilty as the thief. If there were few receivers, there would be few thieves. A grave look, even silence, will shame a slandering tongue. No one repeats slander willingly to unwilling ears. Evil-speaking has an evil conscience, which awakens as soon as it finds no response. 'The ready hearer of detraction,' says a father, 'is the steel to the flint.' Without him, it is not drawn out.

My brethren, it is a matter of our souls. Since that is true, "[c] Of every idle word thou shalt give account in the Day of Judgement," how much more of biting, unjust, detracting, unloving, untrue words, which most detracting words are!

Would, my brethren, we could set before us more our Saviour's life, our Saviour's words of love, our home in heaven, the sweet peace which shall reign there, the oneness of heart, the loving harmony. There shall be different ranks there: there will have been different attainments: there will be degrees of nearness to the throne of God; there will be different haloes of glory around the heads of the redeemed. It may be that, while all shall behold the face of God

[c] S. Matt. xii. 36.

and of the Lamb, we may even there depend, in some way, on those higher than ourselves. Yet *there*, there could not be one emotion of rivalry, or jealousy, or pain at preference, or coolness of love. One faintest thought of it would mar Heaven. Ye hope to be admitted there for the sake of Jesus. And with whom? With all, if both are saved, with all, against whom men now speak evil, against whom they sin, whom they slight, whom they despise, whom, by their careless idle words, if not out of malice, they cause to be despised. Why then not live here already with all, as we hope that we shall live for ever? If thou thinkest that thy neighbour, of whom thou speakest evil, will be lost for ever, it may be an unloving, any how, it is a dreadful thought. It well deserves earnestness. But if thou hope, that through the merits of our One Redeemer, thy brother, against whom thou speakest, shall be saved too, why speak of thy common dross, which shall then, cleansed by thy One Saviour's Blood, be put off for ever, and not of the good which shall abide? Why not even on earth live as they did, who had our Saviour's words of love fresh in their ears, when "[d] the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." After a few years, thou canst not again speak an evil word, except in Hell. All good is a shadow of eternal good; all evil a foretaste of eternal evil. In a few more years, which, many though they be, are in God's sight, as one day, evil-speaking, detraction, hard, unloving words will live on only in Hell. Why then now so cling to that, which thou must then wish thou hadst never said; which can,

[d] Acts iv. 32.

in those realms of love, never be uttered; for which those in Hell will curse themselves that they ever uttered it? Why not even now imitate the words of Jesus, Who ever spake words of goodness and tenderness and love?

Let us turn to Him now, in our solemn Litany, pray Him to 'deliver us from all uncharitableness' and, as '[e]miserable sinners, call to His memory all the good and health-giving words which He ever uttered upon earth,' and 'pray Him humbly to forgive us all the words, which up to this time we have uttered against His Will or caused others to utter,' and henceforth to direct our words to His Glory and to keep us in His Love.

[e] Prayer of German. P. Canisius, in the Paradise for the Christian soul, P. iii. on Penitence p. 35.

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST'S LOVING THOUGHTS THE REPROOF OF CENSORIOUSNESS.

S. Luke vii. 39, and 48.

"*Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, This Man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him; for she is a sinner.*"

"*Jesus said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.*"

Infinite was the love, infinite the Merits of our Lord's act of Redeeming love, when He died, as next Friday, for us, poor sinners, on that Cross of shame. Infinite was the love, which gleamed through His whole life, in its every act. Full and overflowing with His Infinite Love were His weariness and painfulness, His exceeding tenderness for sinners, His compassion for the weary, His gentleness with the ignorant and prejudiced and slow-hearted, His endurance of those who finally rejected Him, His shedding of His Precious Blood for those who shed it. Infinite was His Love, which shines through His words of love, or warning, or compassion, or

forgiveness or tender invitation, to us, in all times, in all places, under every trial, in every frame of mind, under every sorrow, even if we lie crushed under our own sins and our sinful past. To all, however guilty and deep-stained with sin man can be, so that we are, at the last, weary of the hard bondage under which we have sold ourselves, He utters these words, "[a]Come unto Me, all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Infinite was the love, with which He called us all, the whole human race, and, in speaking to those around Him when He was among us, spoke to all our hearts, one by one, under all our sorrows and our sins, whosoever should ever listen to or hear Him, until time and sin and sorrow should be no more.

But acts and words are finite, although the love in them is infinite. And such doubtless was the meaning of the beloved Apostle, when he said by the Holy Ghost, "[b]There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." If men and angels would attempt to write, as those wondrous deeds and words which He did and spake in the flesh, deserved, not the whole world, not countless worlds, could contain the books. For space is finite; His Love and Goodness and Wisdom and Holiness are Infinite. And if all beings in all eternity would try to set forth that Holiness and Wisdom and Love, which our Saviour Christ, God and Man, Almighty, All-wise, All-Love, All-Holy, shewed in word and deed through that Manhood which God

[a] S. Matt. xi. 28. [b] S. John xxi. 25.

the Word took, they would come to no end. The space of this earth, large as it is, is narrow, compared to other worlds and other space, and would come to an end. Books which should speak of Jesus as they ought, could come to no end. For His Wisdom is unsearchable and His Love is Infinite. We cannot but speak; for it is of His Infinite Love to us: we can come to no end in speaking; for His Love is Infinite.

But since such is the love of the deeds and words of Jesus, what shall we think of His Thoughts of love? His Deeds and Words, directly addressed to us, fall almost all within the narrow bounds of three years and a half. We know indeed that for us He lived consciously nine months in the Virgin's womb; for us He was born in cold and penury; for us He endured willingly the pain and shame of Circumcision; for us He was persecuted in His Infancy; for us He was helpless, while He sustained the worlds at His Will. For us He taught in the temple, was obedient to His creatures, His Parents; for us He laboured as a carpenter. Yet His words and deeds for us lay within the compass of thirty-four years; and mostly within those last three years and a half of His Ministry. Words and acts must be finite. Even the Acts of Almighty God are numbered. God vouchsafes to temper His Infinity to our finiteness, when He vouchsafes to act or speak, out of Himself. But when we think of our Redeemer's thoughts of love for us, we seem to ourselves like tiny atoms, floating up and down in a boundless abyss of love. Above, below, around, behind, before, is one measureless expanse of love. We know, of ourselves, how

thoughts crowd into our minds, how quick they flash, how they pierce, how they throng one another, how they can hardly find entrance, how we can ourselves hardly grasp them. We know how overwhelming, thoughts of love may be; how the soul is filled with them, transparent with them, kindled by them, oppressed with them; how they throng the more, the more we admit them, how they penetrate all besides; how they stretch out beyond ourselves; how they multiply inexhaustibly!

In our Lord Jesus, all was ordered, serene, free; all passionless, infinite in loveliness. Yet if such can be the thoughts of love in us, who are so bounded, wearied, passible, uneven, exhaustible, what must have been *His* thoughts, Whose human Soul was ever irradiated by the vision of God; Who, being perfect God and perfect Man and, in Unity of Person, One Christ, His very Human Nature was continually overstreamed with Divine Love, and Divine Wisdom, and Divine Goodness, and, through Personal Union, partook of all the communicable Properties of the Godhead. His thoughts of love for us, as God, were in all Eternity, before Creation was. He was "[c] the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world." "[d] God saved us and called us with a holy calling—according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world was." "[e] Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Unchangeable are the thoughts of God. Before God created any thing, we were in His Mind. His Infinite Mind beheld us; He, in His unchangeable Decree and purpose,

[c] Rev. xiii. 8. [d] 2 Tim. i. 9. [e] Acts xv. 18.

gave us this grace in Christ, which now, if we are in grace, we have. Never was there time, when this purpose of love towards us was not in the Mind of God. What God gives us, that He willed eternally to give us. He created us, that He might give us what eternally, in purpose, He gave us. In all eternity, then, He gave us His Only Begotten Son to become Man for us, and to die for us, when we should *be*, and should have fallen from His grace. In all eternity, God the Son willed to become Man, and to bear for us all those sorrows which He bore, and to die for us. In all eternity, every portion of His love for each one of us was ever in Himself, nay, one must say, part of Himself. And when He did not abhor the Virgin's womb, but for love of us became Incarnate, from that moment when the Power of the Highest overshadowed her, His Godhead was united with that human Soul and Body and Mind, which in her womb He took. And so that Human Soul even then knew all which He should suffer for us and from us and for our sins. Even then He knew exactly all which He should suffer. Nay, He began His sufferings then. Every circumstance was ever present to His thoughts. We, amid any sufferings, at times even for weariness or through other duty, forget our griefs. The Garden of Gethsemane and Mount Calvary were ever before His Soul. He ever heard the blasphemies of the multitude, deriding His Agonies. He ever saw them, coming out, as now, with swords and staves to take Him. He ever saw the Crown of thorns, the white robe of scorn; the mock purple raiment, the reed, the rude brutal officers who smote Him; the

poor wretches who spat upon Him; the coarse soldiery, who scourged Him: He ever felt the death-thirst, the desolation, the dislocated limbs, the racked frame; the traitor's kiss, yea, thine own ingratitude, who hast so often denied Him. He ever tasted the vinegar and the gall. Mind, Body, Soul, yea, every faculty of His Soul was to be saturated with suffering. Every Attribute, His Love, His Compassion, His Holiness, His Justice, His Zeal for His Father's Glory, nay, His very Oneness of Will with the Father, was to be outraged; and yet He loved us and, in all Eternity and all His Life through, He willed all this for love of us. His whole life was thus one thought of disinterested, perfect, all-holy Love; which loved us while we loved Him not, that we, not He, should gain by His love.

How, again, where we admire or love, do we judge of a whole life of love by one outstanding act, or one deep word of love. What a volume of love there lies in that one word of our Good Shepherd, "[f] when He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing. And when He cometh home He calleth His friends and His neighbours [the heavenly hosts] together, and saith, Rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost;" "[g] Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more;" "[h] His Father fell on his neck and kissed him;" "[i] Jesus, beholding him, loved him;" "[k] Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." All this was repeated countless times during His earth-

[f] S. Luke xv. 5, 6. [g] S. John viii. 11.
[h] S. Luke xv. 20. [i] S. Mark x. 21. [k] S. Luke xxiii. 34.

ly life; and now He, the sinner's Friend, thinks and feels it over each lost sinner, whom His Grace hardly wins back to His love. He is pleased to say, that in this "[l] He saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied." His Soul was full and rested in joy, because the sinners, for whom He poured out His Soul to death, were justified and saved. He falls on the neck of every repentant sinner; He admits him again to His holy kiss: He waits for him; He knocks at the door of his heart; He says to the soul, "[m] Open to me, My sister," "[n] Turn to Me and live ye." His Heart of love yearns over each single soul, rejoices in love over each one of us, if we but turn to Him.

And with all this multiplied, unwearied, fulness of love, how was He full of love for those whom the world scorned, despised, yea, justly despised, though they themselves were not just in despising them! How did He behold in love the good which He willed to re-create in those outwardly evil! The Pharisee knew rightly, "who and what manner of woman" she had been, who touched Jesus: he knew not, that He was come on earth in order to save sinners. The Pharisee knew what a fountain of defilement she had been; he knew in what mire the Image of God had been smeared over and defaced. He knew not that Jesus had inwardly given her repentance; repenting, had transformed her; that He had melted away her dross with the fire of His love; that while he himself was blaming her for what she had been, Angels and the Lord of Angels were rejoicing in what He had remade her and what she

[l] Isa. liii. 11. [m] Cant. v. 2. [n] Ezek. xviii. 32.

was; that while he himself was standing without, coldly criticising, she was a fellow-citizen of the Angels, united by faith and love to the Lord of Angels, the espoused of her Redeemer, the pattern of all penitents, in whose salvation He should be glorified.

Nay more, how tenderly did He excuse those whom others blamed! How did He excuse Magdalene when she sat at His Feet, or with thankful profusion poured the oil over His Feet and Head, when the covetous Judas, and even His disciples at first, counted it waste. In the world's judgement, profusion in God's service is counted waste still. Our Redeemer interpreted to good, what in Magdalene was probably an undefined expression of grateful love, and promised that the act which they blamed, should live and be praised wherever He Himself should be known in the whole world. How, again, did He excuse the Apostles, that they could not fast, as the Jews did, amid the abundant consolations of His Presence! They *could* not fast, it was against nature to fast, amid the overflowing joys of His own Presence. He acknowledged the duty of fasting: He hallowed it by His prophecy, that when He, the Bridegroom, should be taken away from them, then should His disciples fast in those days. Yet He excused them then, that they could not do it, amid their exceeding joy.

Again when, constrained by hunger, they seemed to the Jews to break the sabbath by plucking the ears of corn, He excused them, that God regarded the needs of us His creatures more than His own positive law.

When John Baptist might have minished His own reputation by the question of seeming doubt from the prison, how did He take occasion at once to speak to the multitudes about John, that he was no reed shaken by the wind, blown to and fro with the varying eddies of time, but a Prophet, yea and more than a Prophet, the special Messenger before the Lord's Face. He gave His highest praises to John *then*, when man might have thought that, broken by the confinement of the prison, he wavered.

More still! when the adulteress was taken in the very act, and there was nothing to plead; God's law condemned her to death; Jesus Himself could not mitigate her sinfulness. It was open, without defence, without excuse. How did He obtain her release by appeal to the consciences of those who condemned her; and when no man dared to condemn her in *His* sight Who read the hearts, He lessened not her past sin, but He looked on to the future. As He does so often now with penitents, He brings before her at once her sin and its forgiveness. He stands between the dead and the living. He severs between her past and her future life. He owned it sin, but He looked on to future freedom from sin, which His grace could give her, "[o] Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

Yet here at least the woman was convinced of her sin. She knew its guilt; she must have known its hatefulness in the presence of the Holy Jesus. The rude rabble around His cross, the malicious Pharisees were still sinning, still deriding, still

[o] S. John viii. 10, 11.

mocking Him in the midst of His agonies, and He seizes on the one only excuse, which could be left them, "[p] Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They must have known that He was a good Man; they had sought false witness in vain against Him: they knew not that they had crucified the Lord of Glory, their own Saviour and Redeemer.

Such were judgements of Jesus. What was the judgement whereby He was condemned? They had some appearances against Him. Either He was all which His words went to, the Judge of all, Who had the prerogative of God, to forgive sins: the Lord of the sabbath, Who could dispense with the laws of God: the Lord of life, Who could and would in three days raise up the temple of His own Body: God was His very own Father in a way special to Himself alone, and so He, the Man of sorrows, was (as they interpreted Him) "equal with God:" either He was a King, although not of this world, or He would have been what they called Him. Our Lord specially blames the Pharisees, that "[q] they judged according to appearance;" they judged according to their prejudices, who and what sort of person the Messiah should be; they judged according to His Manhood and the form of a servant; and they denied their Lord, they crucified their Saviour, they judged their Judge, they blasphemed their God.

On which side will you be, my brethren? See on one side the lowly Jesus, justifying what *could* be justified; looking hopefully for good, where, up

[p] S. Luke xxiii. 34. [q] S. John vii. 24.

to that time, there had been only evil; mitigating what could not be excused; forgiving what could not be mitigated. On the other, see rash, unloving judgements; judgements according to appearance; judgements formed in prejudice; judgements in ignorance of the heart. Wilt thou forbear judgements with thy Saviour in love, or wilt thou judge in ignorance or prejudice with the Pharisees?

My brethren, it is not a light thing, of which I speak, although it *is* an every day thing. It is an every day thing to judge rashly, to judge unjustly, to judge without knowledge of facts, to judge by appearances, to judge from prejudice, ill-will, grudge, party-spirit, pique; not to say, from groundless dislike or even the malice of the heart. But then it is an every day thing, by such judgements to be alien from the mind and heart and love and judgements of Jesus. It is an every day thing to incur judgement without mercy by shewing no mercy; to fall under the sentence of *His* judgement Who said, "[r]Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged."

God does not then forbid *all* judgement, for He says, "[s]judge righteous judgement." He forbids not judgements according to law and right. But He forbids the world's judgements; He forbids rash judgements; such as are, judgements upon surmises, judgements without full cognizance of facts, upon insufficient proofs, upon one-sided statements, upon hidden and so assumed motives.

Heathen justice required this. 'Hear the other side' was a proverb of Heathen equity. God's word

[r] S. Matt. vii. 1, 2. [s] S. John vii. 24.

has embalmed and sanctioned Heathen and Jewish justice. "[t]I will hear thee, when thine accusers are also come." "[u]It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him." "[x]Doth our law judge any man," says Nicodemus, "before it hear him and know what he doeth?" We ourselves attest that this rule is right, when we ourselves feel that any thing is at stake. Our English justice is rightly jealous that the minds of those who have to judge, should not be preoccupied by partial statements.

But what is unjust in the greatest things, is unjust also in the least. The greatness of the evil may aggravate the sin; it cannot make good evil. To steal is a sin, whatever is the amount stolen: to lie is a sin, whatever the importance or unimportance of the matter: to bear a false witness is a sin, however slight the injury, which that false witness may involve: to judge rashly is a wrong against love, is one habit of sin, whatever be the matter in which men judge.

All judgements of another are sinful, through which men blame or despise their brother in their hearts, without adequate grounds. It matters not in this, whether we judge rashly ourselves or adopt the rash judgements of others. Both are sin. By adopting the rash judgements of others, we make them our own. We make ourselves partakers of others' sins. All judgements are rash, by which we judge of another man's character as a whole. Evil

[t] Acts xxiii. 35. [u] Ib. xxv. 16. [x] S. John vii. 51.

is so much mingled with good, and there is so much good even in the evil, that charity will think no evil, because it ventures not to judge at all. To judge is the prerogative of God Who knows the heart. Some faults are overt; much good is secret. It may be that what we see of evil is the one defect of human infirmity, which cleaves to a character of good, or the one remnant of the natural temper, which, through the grace of God, is almost subdued. It *may* be the remnant of past evil. Those who know most of our condition of mingled good and evil, most withhold their judgements, when they do not know all. Outward failings on the surface are often compensated by inward good. The surface often hides, often misleads. The inner self may be wholly different from the outward. The inner good may often hardly gleam through here and there, in flashes which escape the careless eye. It may be purposely kept out of sight. It may be kept for the eye of God alone.

All judgements are rash, which are made without full knowledge of facts; not of the bare fact itself, but what led to it, why it was done, what were the precise circumstances, under which it was done. How difficult it is to judge of the great facts done on the great stage of history! These are, as it were, public facts. We know, as we think, all around them. We see the main circumstances of them. And yet, as to those very facts, judgements of thoughtful men will be the most opposite. And if this be so as to events the most public; done, one may say, in the sight of all men; how much more surely what passes within the walls of thy neigh-

bour's house! How rare it is, that any one knows the whole facts of any case; what labour it costs to learn them, to weigh them, to have access to all which throws any light on them! Perhaps there are not many events which, during one's whole life, one knows thus thoroughly. And if each one knows in his whole life thus few, then each could, in his whole life, only in those few cases, at most, judge rightly. And if each could, in thirty or forty or fifty years, judge rightly, only in those few cases, how few real judgements there can be! And if there are only these few real judgements, how few cases can there be, in which there is even the basis of right judgement! And if so, even abating all prejudice or ill-will or interest or whatever else may pervert the judgement, how very few right judgements there can be! And yet what is more common than for people to say, 'I know all about a thing,' when they know, at most, only some partial facts, told by biassed persons?

All judgements are rash, in which one has oneself a bias. All thoughtful men feel this. They are afraid of themselves. In what concerns themselves, they would not adjudge between themselves and their neighbour. They fear, in goods of this world, to be warped. They lean on the opposite side, for fear of being swayed unduly. They give things, as it is said, against themselves. It is thought no disrespect to decline any person, however upright, as a judge, who has any interest in the judgement. And yet, as to the characters of others, such are just the persons who most judge, and from whom most judgement comes. Without some interest, people form

but passing judgements. Lasting judgements are those, where pride or self-love or interest have been wounded. Such memories live on in the soul. Such are mostly spoken of to others. The judgement is repeated again and again, because the soul has been wounded, and feels the smart still.

The case is even worse, if there be a supposed interest of religion. Self never lurks so securely, as when there is a plea of conscience. Self puts forth conscience to itself. It opposes the false conscience to the true. True conscience says, 'thou knowest not; thou shouldest not judge.' False conscience dares not say, 'I *do* know;' but it puts forth some ground, why it need not know and yet may judge. The Pharisees and Sadducees hated S. John Baptist, because he was stricter than even their outward strictness, and the people went out to him in the wilderness, confessing their sins, and he warned themselves of the judgements of God hanging over them. John's judgement was not rash, even when he called them, "[y] a generation of vipers." It was severe; but he was a prophet, and it was the judgement of God. It was judgement, not *of* them but *to* them; judgement, in order that they might yet repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and so escape the judgement of God. They could not deny it, and so they questioned his claims, and urged that he did no miracles, and accounted for his stern severity, saying, that "[z] he had a devil." Our Lord came as "[a] the Friend of sinners," and Him they essayed to discredit, as though he would relax the law, forgiving those whom the law condemned to die

[y] S. Matt. iii. 7. [z] S. John x. 20. [a] S. Matt. xi. 19.

(as the adulteress); or because He owned that God's people were to be under bondage (as in the tribute money); or because He broke the sabbath and the law of Moses. They lay hold of seeming contradictions, which were united in Him; that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, and He seemed to come out of Galilee; that Christ was to be from above; "[b] when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is," Jesus was the carpenter's Son and the Carpenter: Christ was to live for ever; Jesus said that He, the Son of Man, was to be crucified. They even knew the facts on which they judged, and yet they judged falsely, because they would not look to other facts which might change their judgement, and make it true. Their very condemnation was, that they judged from seeming facts. "[c] Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgement." "[d] Ye judge after the flesh."

All judgements are rash, which are made by those accustomed to judge their neighbours rashly; or by those who have been on the look out for any fault, or who expect or are accustomed to find it. Each act of rash judgement prepares the way for another. We find and see what we expect to find and see. The mind becomes accustomed to look for the fault; it takes slight indications as certain proofs. 'What,' says a thoughtful writer[e] well acquainted with human nature, 'what is more common than to take conjectures for proofs? And yet what is more to be feared than a mind of this sort, which makes proof out of what it likes, and believes that it has seen whatever

[b] S. John vii. 27. [c] Ib. ver. 24. [d] Ib. viii. 15.

[e] Bourdaloue, sur le jugement téméraire. T. ii. Carême.

it has judged to be? You 'could not help seeing what was to be seen and what you condemned.' No! Christians. But it depended on you not to give your minds to see what was in imagination only; it depended on you to turn away your mind from them; it depended on you to mistrust and suspect them; it depended on you to oppose to them a thousand former mistakes, into which the presumption of a pretended proof made you fall. Had you done so, this seeing, which made you despise your brother, would have been at most a simple doubt, upon which you would not have relied. You *may* see what you see; but when it is matter of condemning, you are not allowed to love to see, to seek to see, to set yourself to see. Why? Because with this disposition, infallibly you will often see what is not, and will not see what *is;* because with this malicious desire, you will certainly see too far; you will magnify objects; you will see as a beam what is only a mote and an atom; you will regard as an habitual vice what is only a passing fault; the impetuosity of your spirit will carry you away, likelihoods will dazzle you, appearances will deceive you. Perhaps you have yourself been judged of just as often, on what people thought they saw, and which you say was not there to see. As often you have complained of these precipitate and ill-founded judgements. Why do you not say to yourselves what you have said to others? The prudence, the caution which you exact of them, why exact you it not of yourselves?'

All judgements are rash, which impute bad motives to acts or words which might in themselves be good or bad, according as the motive was good or bad.

"[f] Charity thinketh no evil." If an act may spring from a good or bad motive, the law of love binds us to take the good. Human love does so, where it greatly loves. 'Love is blind,' says the proverb. But then if deep human love is mostly blind; if, as is well known, they who are deeply attached to one another before marriage, see not or scarcely see faults in one another; if even the married too, when the passion of love has calmed into deep affection, scarcely see each others' faults, certainly see less of them than others think they see; if parents so often think their own children all perfection; where is the love which is a spiritual grace, the first fruits of the Spirit, that it does not work in us Christians, what strong human affections will work, even without the grace of Christ?

But such judgements, besides that they are rash and unloving, have this special evil, that they intrude themselves into the prerogative of God. He only Who sees the heart can judge the heart. "[g] Judge nothing before the time," says God, "until the Lord come Who shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts." God alone "[h] searcheth the hearts and reins." Angels cannot read man's heart; devils judge only by the outward acts or looks. "[i] Who art thou," God says, "who judgest Another's servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth." The heart is the sanctuary of God. God alone can enter there. To God Alone its secret corners are light. God Alone can count all its motions. A labyrinth it

[f] 1 Cor. xiii. 5.
[g] 1 Cor. iv. 5.
[h] Ps. vii. 9.
[i] Rom. xiv. 4.

is to itself. How much more to thee! Who well-nigh knows his own heart? How difficult it often is to people to tell which of two motives sways them! How often will tender consciences suspect their own motives, even when they are really moved by good! How are they puzzled and distressed as to some secondary motive, or mistake a passing emotion for their real motive! And yet into this secret place, where God holds His court, which, until *the* Day of Judgement shall close all judgement of man, is closed to man, man will in his fancy enter, and rule and decide and pronounce upon the secret motives, as if he were Almighty God, or as if God Himself had revealed them.

And what is more common than these judgements? They are the very chief matter of rash judgements. Few actions which man knows of, bear their own character stamped upon them. Great sins mostly seek darkness and are hidden in darkness, until the Light of the Great Day. Man 'judges,' where he does not know. Of the things which we know, we do not say that we 'judge,' but that we *know* them. Men judge not only things indifferent, but even things done or said for the glory of God. One goes to Church or to the Sacrament oftener than others. They say, 'he thinks himself better than others;' while he himself is going perhaps, as a miserable sinner, to ask of God pardon or grace. Or he fasts, because Christ said, His disciples should fast. Again it is said, 'he would be wiser or stricter than his neighbours;' while he is simply following his conscience. Or one leaves home and friends to minister to the poor, the ignorant, the sick. 'They are

ambitious,' it is said, 'or cannot be content with domestic duties, or long to be spoken of;' when they long only to be hidden. Or one adorns the House of God, out of reverence for His Great Name, and that even outward things may rather lead the mind up to God than away from Him. He 'makes religion consist in externals,' they say. Or he exhorts people diligently to prepare themselves when they come to the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, and magnifies Him, Who so gives Himself unto us. 'He would magnify himself,' they say, 'as the dispenser of Christ's Sacraments, and place the Sacraments instead of Christ.'

So manifoldly does man judge rashly, a whole character from a few detached actions, or facts; on one-sided evidence, without full knowledge of them; or under a bias or prejudice; or converting passing thoughts into conjectures, and strengthening conjectures into suspicions, and suspicions into certainty; or lastly, usurping God's prerogative to judge the heart which is known certainly to its Maker only.

These judgements, evil as they are, would be bounded in number. The greater part of rash judgements have this uncertainty over and above, that they are formed on the reports of others; but so they are almost countless. Even they who would not venture, of themselves, to condemn another, venture to adopt at once the hard judgements of another, whom they think acute, or moderate or unprejudiced or not ill-disposed. And yet rumour always grows, as it flies. It takes a new colour according to the mind which receives it. Happy were we, did people receive the truths of faith, as

firmly as they do the conjectures of idle imaginings. Yet thy neighbour will answer in the Day of Judgement for the rash judgements which he has himself formed. He cannot answer for thine.

My brethren, we shall, each one of us, stand one day at the Judgement-seat of Christ. We shall be judged, as we have judged. Our Lord says it, Who now is our Advocate, and then shall be our Judge. The question then will be, not as to the acuteness of our judgements, not as to our penetration, not whether we were right or wrong, but whether we loved. Happy, blessed ignorance will it be in that Day, not to have known how to judge, except one's self. Happy will he be, who shall have used the judgements of others, or the appearances against others, to ask himself, 'Is this in thee too?' and shall have asked God to forgive and to amend it. He has no leisure or heart for the faults of others, who is busy with his own. Happy error then, which shall not have seen even his neighbour's real faults, but shall have cast over them the robe of charity, until he see them in that Day, forgiven. In that Day one grain of charity will outweigh the acuteness of the whole world.

Let us imitate the love of Jesus. He, the Judge of all, while in the flesh, judged not sinners; He bore with them; He bears with us. He, by bearing with them, won them. It is not long to wait. All secret things will be clear then. Then shall we have knowledge, if here we have love. In that Day it will profit thee, to have judged *one* only; thyself. To judge ourselves and not to judge others, is the way not to be judged of the Lord. Shew mercy to

thyself by not judging thy brethren. Thy mercy on thy neighbour will be poured back in mercy on thyself. Our Lord Himself says it, "[k] Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." And for the past, let us plead to our Dear Lord, all those thoughts of love[l], which from and in all eternity He ever had; and above all, that by which He, the Eternal Word, thought to become Man, and to die that we might not die eternally; and let us from our heart of hearts pray Him in turn to forgive us all the unloving thoughts which we ever entertained, or occasioned others to entertain, and to give us grace henceforth, to act, speak and think only in and for His Love.

[k] S. Luke vi. 37.

[l] Prayer of P. Canisius (as in Serm. xvi.)

SERMON XVIII.

CHRISTIAN ZEAL.

Rom. ix. 1—3.

"*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*"

O MIGHTY, almost inconceivable, thoughts, and words of love! O holy power of Divine charity, above nature, forgetting nature, contrary to nature! S. Paul knew, as man could know, what it would be, to be with Christ. He was, through the power of the Holy Ghost and the might of Divine love, with Christ continually. In the flesh, he was absent from the Lord; in spirit he ever was with the Lord. To him "[a]to live was Christ." Christ was the Source and Giver of his life; Christ was the Pattern and End and aim of his life. His life was the life of Christ within him. "[b]I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." So was S. Paul one with Christ, that all which was of Paul was dead; all human passions, hopes, fears,

[a] Phil. i. 21. [b] Gal. ii. 20.

desires, pleasures were dead in him; his corrupt nature was crucified with Christ, and was dead, and was kept dead, nailed to the Cross of Christ; and Christ lived in him, united with him, one with him, through His Sacraments and His Spirit, Who is Sanctification, Purity, Immortality, Light, Truth, Love; as He prayed for those who should believe in His Name, "[c] As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

We can hardly, nay, we cannot, in thought conceive, what and how great the union of S. Paul with Christ was. In spiritual things we can conceive little beyond what we know. Very close must have been that union, that the humble Apostle could say, "[d] Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Very fervent must have been his love, "[e] to whom to live was Christ," who could boldly say, "[f] Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." One thing he looked for. One object he had ever before him; with one hope, he died daily; for one prize he ever pressed onwards; for one gain, he counted all things loss; for one sight, he was blind to all created things; for one joy, all his sufferings was made to him joy; all things painful, gladness; hunger and thirst were to him fulness; dispraise was praise; dishonour, honour; to be "[g] made as

[c] S. John xvii. 21, 26. [d] Gal. ii. 20. [e] Phil. i. 21.
[f] Rom. viii. 38, 39. [g] 1 Cor. iv. 13.

the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things," was his crown and his diadem; his chains were ornaments of gold; prisons were royal palaces; "[h] stripes above measure" were marks of glory; "[i] weariness and painfulness" were rest and refreshment; "[k] perils of waters" were his pillow; "[l] watchings" were still repose; to "[m] have nothing" was to "[n] abound in all things."

That one thing, which so transformed and transfigured all things to him, which gilded every cloud with glory unspeakable, which made darkness light, and death, life, was the knowledge, that "[o] to depart" was "to be with Christ," "[p] to be absent from the body" was "to be present with the Lord." And this too, his very inmost life, all which he had been called to, for which, and for his Lord in it, he had toiled, endured, died by a daily death, this too he was ready to give up. And for what? That they who had reviled him, had persecuted him from city to city, who hated him, who had bound themselves by an oath not to eat or drink until they slew him, to whom to slay him was meat and drink, who could not endure him, but cried, "[q] away with such a fellow from the earth," that *they* might take his place in heaven, enter into his Master's joy, behold Him in glory, Whom he himself, not they, had served and loved.

One thing he would not part with, the love of Christ. That love he would have with him, wherever he was, wherever God might place him. "[r] Who

[h] 2 Cor. xi. 23. [i] Ib. 27. [k] Ib. 26.
[l] Ib. vi. 5. [m] Ib. 10. [n] Ib. viii. 7. [o] Phil. i. 23.
[p] 2 Cor. v. 8. [q] Acts xxii. 22. [r] Rom. viii. 35.

shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus?" *That* he could not lose, for none can lose it, who part not willingly from it. But the presence of Christ, the blissful glory of His Countenance, the joy of being with his Master, the entrancing, transporting vision of *Him* Who had called him while he was persecuting Him, this, the very bliss of eternity, the blessed-making sight of God, S. Paul was ready to forego, if so be his Redeemer might be the more glorified, and the souls of "[s]his kinsmen after the flesh," they, to whom "the promises" appertained, might be saved, and joined to the heavenly Choirs who adore the Master Whom he loved.

S. Paul would not be separated from the love of Christ; but he could endure to think of being separated, in place, in sight, in joy from Christ Himself. "I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ." He willed, like the thing devoted, separated to God, and sacrificed to Him, to be cut off from all besides; yet not from God, but from the Presence of God. He who had been "[t]the offscouring of the world," could have borne to forfeit the very sight of God, if so be God Himself might thereby be the more glorified, and souls might be won to Him and live to Him eternally.

Such was an Apostle's fervour; such, an Apostle's love. Great must be preciousness of zeal for souls, that God put into his soul such a thought as this, that he could bear even to be separated from the sight of Him Whom his soul loved, if so be greater glory might so be gained to Him, and there were more to love Him.

[s] Rom. ix. 4. [t] 1 Cor. iv. 13.

Precious, indeed, in the sight of the Lord is true zeal for souls. Precious indeed, because there is nothing in the whole world so precious, as the soul of man, redeemed by the Blood of Christ. Not the whole world, not the whole universe, sun, moon and all the countless hosts of heaven, would be as the very dust in the balance, weighed with one soul, for which Christ died. Great and divine you would think the office to uphold in being and direct in their courses all those heavenly lights, which brighten our day and make our night serene and calm. When Joshua bid the sun and moon stand still, it is said, "[u]There was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man." Great was it when, at the prayers of Elijah and Elisha, S. Peter or S. Paul, death gave back its slain; when at Apostles' prayers the blind saw, or the deaf heard, or the lame walked. But greater far is it, when one human soul is won out of the jaws of Satan, to adore its Redeemer for ever. Sun and moon shall pass away; those restored from death again died; the eyes renewed to sight, again grew dim; the ear again was dulled, and the limbs stiffened in the tomb. But the soul awakened by Christ, living through Christ, upheld by Christ, never sleeps, never dies, never passes away, but passes only out of the world's sight to the blessed-making sight of God. God made heaven and earth; '[v]to man,' it was said of old, 'He gives the power to make earth heaven. God kindled the heavenly lights; kindle thou,' He says, 'brighter lights; for thou canst shew to them who are in error, the light

[u] Joshua x. 14. [v] S. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Hom. 25.

of truth.' Therefore shall those who turn many to righteousness shine, as the stars, yea above the stars for ever and ever; for they shall shine with the brightness of the glory of the indwelling God. '[w]Of all divine works the most divine is to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls.'

It is the greatest work, in which God employs man. For it is the greatest work of God Himself. It is the end, for which God the Father made all besides; for which God the Son became Man; for which God the Holy Ghost pleads with, calls, sanctifies, indwells man, and unites him unto God. The salvation of man is the combined work of the All-Holy Trinity. They together ordained it; They, in union, brought it about; and in this Their work, They join in with Themselves the work of man.

God Himself is zealous for the redemption of souls. "[x]He clad Himself with zeal as with a cloke." "[y]God *so* loved the world," with such exceeding might and weight of love, pure love, undeserved love, love which had and could have no return, "that He gave," not angels, not worlds, not adopted or created sons, but "His Only Begotten" Coequal "Son," to death, that man might live.

And who can speak of *His* love for us, Who became as one of us, Who dwelt eternally in the Bosom of His Father's Love, and thence, from His royal throne, vouchsafed to come to take the sinless infirmities of our human nature? Not as we, senseless and unconscious, but with the fullness of Divine knowledge, He dwelt, God and Man, within the

[w] de Cœlesti Hierarch. [Dionys.] c. 3.

[x] Is. lix. 17. [y] S. John iii. 16.

narrow bounds of the Virgin's womb. Throughout His earthly life He commanded winds, seas, the dead, and they obeyed Him; His creative Word passed upon the bread and it was multiplied. He died, only because He willed; He rose, when He willed. But, 'for us and for our salvation' He willed all His life long to suffer. Such was His zeal for souls, that they said of Him, "[z]He is beside Himself." They thought Him (horrible to say), carried out of Himself, and mad. He had the same zeal for a single soul, as for His whole people. For, as God, He beheld and loved each single soul with an undivided love. He loved one soul with the same love as the whole human race. The conversion of one sinful disordered woman is to Him "[a]meat and drink." One lost sheep, one prodigal, one son who repented and did his Father's will, which he had insolently refused, pictures at once each single soul and all for whom He died. Each one He lays on His shoulders, and bears him to His own home, the heavenly courts. He falls on the neck of each one penitent, and gives him the kiss of peace. Each returned sinner, who at last does His will, He owns as having ever done it. He wept, though with different tears, over His own friend Lazarus, as over Jerusalem. He taught the one sinful woman of Samaria with the same gentle patience, as Nicodemus; and Nicodemus who came in fear and cowardice, as the whole people. His tenderest love and pains seem shewn to us when He speaks to single souls. He weeps over those who would crucify Him and repent not; He mourns over those who

[z] S. Mark iii. 21. [a] S. John iv. 32.

"[b] fainted and were scattered, as sheep having no shepherd." How He yearns over "[c] the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" He bids them pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest. During life, He was straitened until His Baptism in His own Blood was accomplished. His love was pent in, as it were, His Spirit was held in, confined, pressed together, not allowed to expand itself, as it would, in love, until that aweful hour, when, rejected by those whom He came to save, and withholding from His Human Nature the consolations of His Divine, in order that He might suffer to the full for us, and bear the Father's wrath on sin, He seemed to be forsaken by God also. The Will of His Father, in accomplishing our salvation, had been to Him, in life, meat and drink; in death His last words, before He commended His Spirit to the Father, were, "[d] I thirst," not mere thirst of nature only, but thirst for our salvation, that we might hunger and thirst for Him, and, thirsting, be filled. 'God thirsteth to be thirsted for.'

Our Lord left us an example, that we should follow His steps. He Himself led His own on the way which He marked for them with His own Blood. And well did the Apostles follow Him. They sped like lightning from East to West, from India to this then far-distant, savage, land. God gave them to speak divers tongues, and they held themselves debtors to all whose tongues they spake. They subdued the world to the obedience of Christ. Every where they were the same. Among the wise or the unwise, before kings or the jailor, the lettered or the

[b] S. Matt. ix. 36. [c] Ib. x. 6. [d] S. John xix. 28.

barbarian, one and the same were their boldness and faithfulness and tenderness and love; one and the same were they; for One Spirit every where spake in them; One Spirit kindled one undying zeal, and thirst for souls, and fiery love, burning the more strongly, the wider it spread, and the more it had to overcome. One and the same Spirit gave them one and the same zeal; yet, by turns, bold, enduring, tender, gentle, humble, severe, anxious, self-sacrificing, self-regardless, longing, and in all, bound in one through the love of Christ Jesus. Bold was the zeal which made Felix tremble and almost persuaded Agrippa to be a Christian; enduring the zeal which "[e] travailed, like a woman in pangs," until those who had fallen should be brought back through repentance to be again the sons of God. Tender the zeal which, "in the midst of" the converts new-born to Christ, was mild, "[f] as a nurse would cherish her own children;" and when it rebuked, "[g] wrote out of much affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears." Gentle was the zeal, which "[h] intreated elders as fathers and mothers, the younger, as brothers and sisters with all purity." Humble was the zeal, which "[i] made itself servant to all, that I might gain the more," and "[j] to the weak became as weak, that I might gain the weak." Severe was the zeal, which said, "[k] If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha," (i.e. at the Coming of the Lord let him perish;) or which gave the incestuous over "[l] to

[e] Gal. iv. 19. [f] 1 Thes. ii. 7. [g] 2 Cor. ii. 4.
[h] 1 Tim. v. 1, 2. [i] 1 Cor. ix. 19.
[j] Ib. 22. [k] Ib. xvi. 22. [l] Ib. v. 5.

Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus." Anxious zeal was it, which, when it knew not whether the converts would return to obey the Gospel, S. Paul says, "[m] could find no rest in my spirit" and, "[n] I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Self-sacrificing, which said, "[o] I will very gladly spend and be spent for you;" self-regardless, which added, "though, the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved; but be it so." Longing, which could appeal, "[p] God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ;" "[q] my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown." "Bound in one by love;" "[r] for the love of Christ constraineth us;" "[s] my joy is the joy of you all." And he, who had on him "[t] the care of all the Churches," who, borne by the Spirit of Christ, bore the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the world, "[u] and nothing was hid from the heat thereof;" he, whose heart was so enlarged as to take in within its breadth the compass of the whole world, "[v] a debtor to all, Jew and Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free," cared as thoughtfully, as zealously, as tenderly for one single soul, as he did for the whole world.

But you may say, 'Great and blessed were that glorious company of the Apostles, through whom Christ spoke, in whom the Holy Ghost fully dwelt, to whom He gave power to speak and to do greater

[m] 2 Cor. ii. 13. [n] Gal. iv. 11. [o] 2 Cor. xii. 15.
[p] Phil. i. 8. [q] Ib. iv. 1.
[r] 2. Cor. v. 14. [s] Ib. ii. 3. [t] Ib. xi. 28.
[u] Ps. xix. 6. [v] Col. iii. 11.

things than He Himself spake and did; through whom He converted the world; great and blessed is their memory, and we should love them and God for them. But what is all this to us, such as we are? To you who have the care of souls it may be something, and would that there were more of Apostles' zeal! But what is this to us?' And I ask you, 'What were the poor widow's two mites[x] to the costly offerings for the temple?' In themselves they availed nothing. In the sight of God they were of great price; "[y] more than all the rich offerings which the rich out of their abundance cast into the treasury." So too there may be burning zeal, which ascends to the sight of God and pleads with God, and is heard by God, and avails with God and draws down from Him blessings on the world which knows nothing of it, and would count it nothing.

If we are Christians, we must have zeal; if we are earnest Christians, we must have earnest zeal; if we were Apostolic Christians, we should have Apostolic zeal. For what is zeal? Zeal has two aspects, the one towards God, the other towards man. Zeal towards God is a burning desire for the Glory of God, that the whole world should love, honour, serve Him with all their hearts and minds and souls and strength; and since this is not so, it grieves, for love of His Holy Name, that He is so little known, so little loved, so much blasphemed and dishonoured. Zeal towards man is a kindled longing that he should adore and love and honour God, and find in Him all good and peace and joy and bliss,

[x] S. Mark xii. 42. [y] Ib. 43, 44.

and know the bliss of loving Jesus, and be saved by Him and love Him for ever.

This zeal we must, in some way, have, if we are not Christians in name, or lukewarm Christians. No one can know how great a good is God, how full of bliss and peace is the thought of Jesus, how great an evil it is to dishonour God, and not feel a pang when he sees or thinks of others who know not God and seek Him not, nor love Him. It is the most piteous sight in the whole world to see one, for whom Christ died, a stranger to Christ, forgetful of Christ, in word and deed denying Christ. There can be no real love, without some measure of zeal. S. Andrew and S. Philip scarcely knew Christ; S. Andrew had been with Him one day, S. Philip had but heard Him say, "[z] Follow Me." But forthwith Andrew found his own brother Simon Peter, and S. Philip found Nathanael and they brought them to Christ. They longed that others should know Him Whom they had seen and loved and adored as "[a] the Lamb of God." The Samaritan woman, for joy that she had been found by Christ, left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and called to all whom she could, "[b] Come, see; is not this the Christ?"

If you know Christ, you must long that others should know Him. Every one has some one, whom they may win to greater love of Christ. You may be Christ's Apostles, Christ's messengers, to your own household, to husband, brother, sister, child, servant. A holy grandmother and mother taught S. Timothy; some of God's great saints have owed their love of God to holy women, who taught them

[z] S. Matt. iv. 19. [a] S. John i. 29. [b] Ib. iv. 29.

early. A poor unlettered woman prayed for nine years, night and day, for a wild, blinded son; and he became a holy saint, and the greatest teacher of the Church after the Apostles unto this day.

None are too poor or too busy to pray, if they have fervent zeal; and fervent zeal availeth much with God, and wins His converting grace for those who pray not for themselves. S. Stephen's dying prayer for his persecutors won God's grace for S. Paul, and how did his fiery zeal live again and glow again in him, and fire the world! How does even S. Paul, that chosen vessel, that tongue of fire, ask, in well-nigh every Epistle, for the prayers of his converts, not only that the word of God might have free course, and speed unhindered through the world, but that he himself might have utterance given him, and "[c]he might open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel." How may not Christ's ministers now need prayers, since S. Paul did! When Moses prayed, Joshua and Israel prevailed; when many prayed, S. Peter was delivered. How might not the Gospel be spread, if all, every where, would say daily with their whole hearts one fervent prayer, "[d]Thy kingdom come!" Doubtless, this increased zeal in converting souls, which God has given, is the fruit of increased zeal in prayer. United prayer besiegeth Heaven and overcometh God Who longeth to be overcome.

But then, zeal which would be heard, must be self-denying. 'Charity begins at home.' Wouldest thou have true zeal, be zealous with thyself. First have pity on thine own soul, and then have zeal for

[c] Eph. vi. 19. [d] S. Matt. vi. 10.

the souls of others. And so it is a blessing to thee to be asked to aid in any act of spiritual mercy. It is a twofold blessing to thee, in that it is an offering to Him, thy Good Father, thy Loving Master, thy tender Redeemer, and He will repay thee; it is a means of denying thyself, putting restraint upon thyself, being earnest with thyself, giving up to God some self-indulgence, which the rather hindered thee in taking up thy Cross and following Christ. It is to exchange a weight which clogs thee, for wings which shall bear thee towards thy God.

If ever the fields were white already to harvest, if ever the ground well-nigh brought fruit of itself, it is now. In this city of mingled magnificence and penury, of multiplied luxury and misery bounded only by men's power to suffer, in which there are miles upon miles of human habitations, dense, thronged, compressed, stifled together, so that the moral atmosphere is choked by the accumulation of misery, there are (it is a matter of course) those who are deadened by their very misery, as others are by their luxury. But among those very outcasts, outcasts not through their own fault, but because there is none to gather them in, those who have gone to seek them have found hearts prepared, open, ready to receive God's truth; hearts which respond the more readily to tones of love, because it has so seldom reached them, and they at least have not hardened themselves against it.

My brethren, we have a blessing or a curse before us. Who would count him a man, who should hear the screams of men women and children in a burning house, and fold his arms and look on and adven-

ture nothing for their deliverance? Who that is a man could endure to see one, amid the boiling waves, stretching forth his hands for help, and risk nothing? Who would see one violently oppressed and hardly used by the brute might of one stronger than he, and, if he had strength, would not help him?

My brethren, it would be zeal to go and face death in torments for Him Who died for us. It were zeal to track barefoot the burning sand or the polar snow, in search of those who might become our Master's sheep, but in searching for whom our own lives might become a prey. It will be zeal in those who leave home and friends to teach others to be the friends of God. But for us, my brethren, who, in our several callings here, may stay and labour in our peaceful duties, for us not by our alms, by denial of some indulgences, by cutting off some petty luxuries, for us not to help others to worship God[e], I ask not, where were our zeal, where our love of God, where our faith, what our hopes, but I would ask, have we then the hearts of men, if we were not to help them, or have we beasts' hearts, to perish like them?

Of those who are gathered here this day, many will not see in the flesh those whom they are called upon in Christ's Name to aid. You cannot see them, now, in the flesh, my brethren; yet within a few years ye shall see them. Then ye shall see those millions of souls at the Judgement-seat of Christ; ye shall see them on the right hand or on the left; you shall see them and know that Christ

[e] Allusions to the object, for which the sermon was preached, are omitted.

died for them. Then you shall see Him Who died for them, Who shed His Blood for you. My brethren, think of the misery of seeing, in that day, any whom one might have helped here to love Christ better, and knowingly passed by on the other side, and left the wounded man uncared for. Think of the joy of having done what thou couldest to gain thy brother, whose joy thou shouldest share eternally. Think of one soul in that endless bliss; think of your Redeemer and your Judge's "[f] Well done, good and faithful servant;" think of His words of doom, "[g] Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire: forasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me," and as ye would wish to have done then, help earnestly, or help not, now.

[f] S. Matt. xxv. 21. [g] Ib. 41, 45.

SERMON XIX.

PRAYER.

S. Matt. xxi. 22.

"*All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*"

What a world, then, my brethren, this would be, if we believed! Now it is full of discontent, heaviness, aching of the heart, weariness of soul, looking forward to things which we have not, repining for things which we have lost, feeding on ashes, complaining of what we have or have not, indulgence in things which bring remorse, sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind.

And yet what idle fretting, what waste of heart and soul and mind and strength all this is, since our Lord Himself says, what we ask we may have! Who would fret about that he had not, if he really believed that for asking, he might have it? Who would be anxious about that which he feareth, if he believed that, on asking, it might be removed? Who would vex himself, as if life had no joy nor peace nor abiding rest, if he believed that on asking, he might have more than his fill, more than he could contain of inward joy and radiant gladness or deep

peace, and never-failing rest? Who would, all his life-long, in restless weariness, chase after shadows of happiness which he never overtakes, if he knew that, if he would ask it of God, it would, hour by hour, be shed around him, meet him in all his ways, brighten all sadness, deepen all gladness?

But you will say perhaps, 'Has this asking and having no conditions?' Clearly all promises have conditions, in the very nature of things. A father would not give his son poison or a sword, if he thought he would destroy himself; or his patrimony, if he knew that he would waste it. To us Almighty God makes promises, as to His children, whom He loves and whom He has made to love Him. He knows and wills and loves our good and our well-being, better than we. It would not belong to His character as All-wise and All-loving, to give us foolish or vain or hurtful things. It cannot be part of His meaning, that He would give us such things, as it would be contrary to His very love to give us, to our own hurt.

But it *is* true, that this asking and having has no bound, except our own real good.

You will recollect, to whom these promises were made. For although they were not made to them only or chiefly, yet the fulness of those large words, "*whatsoever* ye shall ask, in prayer, believing, ye shall receive," belonged to men of the character which *they* had, and to us, in whatever degree we have it.

This, then, is said to us as God's children. This is the one condition of our asking and having. Ask, our good Lord would say, your Father as His chil-

dren, believing in Him, trusting in Him, hoping in Him, trusting yourselves with Him.

1. It is not, then, said as to those who *will* not live as God's children. "[a] The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination," says Solomon, "how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind!" He who *will* not live as God's child makes himself wiser than God. He chooses what God chooses not; he frames to himself a world of his own, and makes its laws for himself. He contradicts or disbelieves the wisdom and goodness of God, in that he chooses what God refuses, refuses what God chooses. What were such an one's prayer, if he spoke out his whole heart, but this, 'O God, I know better than Thou, what is for my happiness. I will take Thy way, when I have had enough of my own; help me now to disobey Thee, and that I be not punished for disobeying Thee.' It is not the sinner's prayer which God will not hear; for we are all sinners; but it is his, who will not part with his sin, who chooses his sin rather than his God.

2. It is not said as to things which we cannot ask, as God's children. To covet passionately the things of this life, even without actual sin; to long to be above those around us; to desire to be admired, thought of, to have a smooth easy course, to be without trial; this is not the temper of God's children. To gain these things might be to lose the soul.

This limit, the words had even as spoken to Apostles. Our Lord spoke them, knowing that they would either not ask what it was unbefitting that they should have, or that, when they knew it was

[a] Prov xxi. 27.

so, they would change their prayer. When our Lord put off the request of the two Apostles to sit on His right hand and His left, they were doubtless glad to exchange the thought of that visible glory which they looked for in His earthly kingdom, for that unseen and better nearness, of which He gave them a glimpse, in the good things prepared by the Father for those that love Him. S. Peter said to our Lord, "[b] It is good for us to be here; let us build here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." But he said it, "[c] not knowing what he said." It was gain to him that he was made a partaker of "[d] the sufferings of Christ," and had to wait for that gladness of unending joy which shall be, when His glory shall be revealed. S. Paul prayed thrice that the thorn in the flesh might depart from him; but the abundance of the grace of his Lord, of which He said, "[e] My grace is sufficient for thee," far more than outweighed the suffering. The weakness of the Apostle became the strength of Christ within him. Elijah prayed for himself, that he might die. "[f] It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." But he who was heard, so as to close or open heaven, so that it rained not or rained according to his word, was not heard for himself. Yet how much better far, not so to be heard, when, after ten more years of toil, heaven opened for himself too, and he, as the picture of his Lord, went up in the chariot of fire with horses of fire, removed, without dying, into the hidden presence of his Lord.

[b] S. Luke ix. 33. [c] Ib. [d] 1 S. Pet. v. 1.
[e] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [f] 1 Kings xix. 4.

So in our time there have been, who have prayed and longed for a painless death, and God heard them by not hearing them. He heard the secret desire of their heart, not by any pains of death to be distracted from Him, by refusing what they asked Him; and He, through the very suffering, took away their slough and refined their souls, purified their whole being from the dross which clung to it, and in one short year of intense suffering refined the soul for an eternity of higher bliss and nearer union with Himself.

3. We are not children of our heavenly Father, if we forgive not from our hearts each other their trespasses; and therefore any secret grudge, any mislike of another, any rankling memory of injury, hinders our prayer being heard. Our Lord subjoins to the promise the very words, "[g] And when ye stand praying, forgive." "[h] One man beareth hatred against another," says the wise man, "and doth he ask pardon of the Lord?" Love is one, as the Being of God, Who is Love, is One. And so whatsoever hinders the pure love of man, hinders so far and in the same degree the love of God, and separates the soul from God. Whence our Lord promises the more, when two ask together in His Name; and S. Peter gives it as a ground for the harmony even of husband and wife, "[i] that your prayers be not hindered." For where there is loving harmony, there the prayer goes up, as on two wings, to heaven; but if one be wanting, it droops and sinks back to the earth again.

4. Then, if we ask not earnestly, we either do not

[g] S. Mark xi. 25. [h] Ecclus. xxviii. 3. [i] 1 S. Pet. iii. 7.

really want what we ask for, or we mistrust that God will give it, and do not really look to Him, as our Father. When some great distress is coming upon us, then we can, most of us, ask earnestly enough. But by our very earnestness then about some deep trouble of this life, we bear witness to ourselves, that there must be something amiss in our faith or our earnestness at other times. Who would ask for the very least thing which he cared for, from man, with the same distractions, the same half-heartedness, with which men day by day ask from Almighty God, that He will forgive them their sins, or (which is one) that He will save them from hell, and give them happiness beyond all thought, Life, Joy, Bliss unceasing, unutterable, yea Himself, for ever?

But even, in lesser things, we often lose what we might have, by holding what we ask for, too cheap. We forget who we are, and Who God is. We think to have what we wish for, for a mere prayer or two. And if we have it not, we grow weary, as if it were a merit to ask, or a weariness to wait. Meanwhile God is forming in us, if we persevere, just that mind which is to be our bliss in all eternity. For what is prayer but the hanging of the creature upon the Creator Who made it for Himself? What is it, but the going forth of the soul to Him Who is the Fulness of its life, to dwell in God, speak with God, rest in God? What is it, but to enter into the light of Eternal Brightness, to be kindled with the glow of everlasting Love, to enter, a bidden guest, into the unseen glory of the Divine Presence, and there, face to Face, to ask Him Who is more ready to give than we to ask?

But is then, you may ask me, all this good and power of prayer only for those, who are, in such degree, children of God? By no means. There are many degrees of asking, many degrees of obtaining. Our Lord was speaking, not of obtaining at all, but of *certainty* of obtaining. Some things we are all certain to have, if we ask; some things we shall have, if we persevere in asking; some things they only are certain to obtain, who are the friends of God; and we, in whatever degree we become so, may ask with the more confidence and shall have the more readily. What we are all certain to obtain, if we ask, is whatever is needed for our well-being. Ask earnestly, not with a divided mind, not, as one did of old, 'give me this grace, only not yet;'[j] not half-wishing and half not-wishing; asking and yet holding back; praying, yet not willing to encounter the cost: but ask with a single stedfast heart, and God has pledged Himself to thee, that He will give it. God willeth to win thee to ask of Him. He often gives us temporal goods, nay, if something lies very near our heart, the life, health, strength of those we love; or He will turn from us some evil which our soul dreadeth. He will often give us things more than we could look for, that we may remember how He heareth prayers, and ask Him what He is yet more ready to give, because it is more precious for our eternal good. He draws us on, as earthly parents do their children, to trust Him in a more simple childlike way.

j 'Lord, give me chastity and continence, only not yet.' S. Augustine's prayer, while unbaptized. Conf. B. viii. § 17. p. 146. Oxf. Tr.

So He would accustom us to look to Him, to betake ourselves to Him in our wants, to go to Him at once, whenever temptation or trial looks too strong for us, to seek Him in every fear, to ask counsel of Him in every doubt, to take to Him every aching of our hearts, to look meekly up to Him in every faintness of our souls. And while He hears us, He re-assures our souls that He is not only Almighty, All-Good, All-Bountiful, Faithful and very Tender, pitying us His creatures, "[k] as a father pitieth his own children," but that He is and will be all this to *us*. We all believe in a way what He has said, "[l] Ask and ye shall receive." It were truer perhaps to say, people do not disbelieve it, because God hath said it. But when we receive what we ask, then the words "Ask and ye shall receive" come to us as a living truth, and we are emboldened to ask more, and more trustfully; and asking more trustfully, we receive more fully, we love more thankfully and more humbly; and thankful humble love opens to us new treasures of the Goodness and Love of God. Each step adds strength to our faith, and life to our love. For now we know of God, not only by the hearing of the ear, but we ourselves have tasted and known His Goodness, and we know, not only that the Lord is gracious, but that we ourselves have been the objects of that Goodness.

God willeth that we should (if I may so speak) make trial of Him, and having by trial found Him faithful, should trust Him more fully, seek Him more earnestly, hope in Him more abidingly. "Prove Me

[k] Ps. ciii. 13. [l] S. Luke xi. 9.

herewith," they are His own words by the prophet, "[m] Prove Me now herewith, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." He was displeased with Ahaz, when, under plea of reverence, he would not ask what God Himself offered him.

We must, as Christians, fix this in our souls, that God heareth prayers. As we act on this, our faith that God will hear and grant what He is asked in His Son's Name, becomes a loving trust, that He will, sometimes at least, hear us. As we go on to ask, our trust becomes stronger; and with our stronger trust, prayer itself becomes more earnest, and our Lord's condition is fulfilled in us, "whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing."

For this belief is not the working of our own minds, not a persuasion of ourselves that we shall have what we ask, be we what we may, and ask we what we may. It is the child-like trust in our Heavenly Father, planted by Him in the soul; nourished by obedience, strengthened by use, enlivened by experience. It is a "[n] hope which maketh not ashamed," because it is founded in the love of God, "[o] which is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which He hath given us."

But as the very end of prayer is to bring the soul near to God, God gives, strengthens, enlarges, deepens, widens, this loving trust in Him, only through prayer itself. God hears even a weak or doubting prayer, or strengthens the doubting heart, that so it may pray more trustfully. He does all

[m] Mal. iii. 10. [n] Rom. v. 5. [o] Ib.

things to win us to pray to Him, because prayer to Him is our soul's life.

If we would but pour out into the ears of God the complaints, with which we in our hearts bemoan ourselves, or which we vent to one another! Would, my brethren, that instead of restlessly tossing to and fro, we would go straight to the Throne of God, not doubting on account of our own demerits, but asking in His Name Whose merits are Infinite! All doubts may vanish at that Name. True! God is Just and Holy, and we are unworthy to approach Him. But He, in Whose Name we ask, is Just and Holy, and He has pledged His own Righteousness and Holiness to us, "Ask and ye shall receive." True! great are our sins; but greater and more overwhelming is His Mercy.

Waste not yourselves then, any more, if you have done so, with those weary tossings, 'Perhaps God will give; perhaps He will not give. He hears prayers, but will He hear mine? He would have heard it, had I always prayed, did not this or that doubt come across me in my prayers, or if those crowds of thoughts did not throng into my soul and break my prayer; He would hear me, were my soul right with Him and did I pray aright, but will He hear such broken, weary, heavy, dull, icy prayers as mine?'

Pray, and thou shalt know that God will hear thy prayers. Pray as thou canst, and pray that thou mayest pray better. The gates of Heaven are ever open, that thou mayest go in and out at thy will. The ears of God are ever to thy heart. The Holy Spirit is ever ready to suggest to thee desires, to

give or enlarge thy faith. Thy Redeemer and thy Lord Jesus is in Heaven, waiting to receive and to present thy petition. He Himself, to Whom thou prayest, prayeth for thee, by His voice, by His Love, by His Blood. He offers the Human Nature which He took for thee to intercede for thee. How can we fail to be heard, when, if we wish, God the Holy Spirit will pray in us; our Lord Jesus, Who is God, prayeth for us; and He Whom we pray, is more ready to give than we to ask. Pray then, and the truth and might of the Almighty and True are pledged to thee, that thou shalt have, more than thou canst ask or think or conceive; Heaven and the Bliss of Heaven, and God to be thine own God for ever and ever.

SERMON XX.

THANKSGIVING.

PHIL. iv. 6, 7.

"*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus.*"

STRANGE it is, that we, poor creatures that we are and miserable, should have any thing to give to Almighty God. What can we give, my brethren? Thanks. A cheap, easy, costless thing, you will think. We think nothing whatever if, fifty times in the day or oftener, we were to say 'Thank you' for any little service which any neighbour or friend or dependent should do to us. It is said so easily, that it does not cost us a thought to do it. We do it as a matter of course, by a sort of instinct. We should be shocked, and think that we had been forgetful of courtesy and kindly feeling, if we happened to forget it. We should fear to have pained whoever had done the little service for us, or lest

we should have seemed careless as to his feelings. People will even take trouble to supply the thanks afterwards. Now, in all this, we bear witness to ourselves, that it is the very feeling of nature itself to thank those who, in things very little as well as great, are kind to us.

But who well-nigh think it necessary to do this to Almighty God? People commonly 'say grace,' as it is called, that is, 'thanks' to God for one of the meals of the day, some for two; and some, I hope, may, thank God in the morning for their sleep and its refreshment; and perhaps in the evening too, for keeping them from any evil. And well is it, whoever has the habit of doing this; and the more he does it from his heart, the more pleasing he will be to God.

Yet are then food and sleep all the good things God gives us or does for us? God so surrounds us with goods, that men think the less of them, because God always gives them. If God only gave us now and then, what He gives us daily, hourly, we should be out of ourselves for wondering awe at His goodness. Miracles they are of His goodness and His power and love; not less miracles than those which we read of, when He divided the sea for His people to pass over, or when He fed them from heaven, or gave them water from the rock. Nay, they are the more wondrous, because God bringeth them about so marvellously, doing all Himself, yet letting us, here too, work together with Him. One and the same Power is it, whether God gives us our food or our drink and our clothing, and warms us, gladdens our eyes with the sun's

glorious light, gives us power to see, supplies us, wherever we go, with air to breathe, and gives us without pain and effort power to breathe it;—one and the same wonderful power and goodness and love is it, as if He ever gave these things to each of us in some new way. Nay, it is a very part of His love that some things, as light and sleep and power to breathe and gain strength, He gives us without any effort of our own; some things through toil and labour which He blesses to our souls. In all things He counsels for us; all things which He doth, He doth for us; all things He fitteth for us. All things which we see or know of, would, but for His upholding power, fall again into nothing. In all things He Himself ministereth to us. "[a]All things serve God," by serving us. Nay, so to speak, Almighty God Himself serveth us, worketh for us, as our Lord says, "[b]My Father worketh hitherto and I work." He supplies our needs by an ever-present working.

And what then of our health, our strength, our powers of mind and body, our thoughts, our memories, our powers to love, to enjoy? Are these from ourselves, or does God give them to us once for all, to hold as our own, to boast of as our own, to be lords of, and to hold them from ourselves? Every power is upheld in us at every moment by God. We remember things or do not remember them; we think or can not think; the thoughts flash into our souls, or they are dry and barren, as God gives or, for our good, suspends them or withdraws them. Those who have watched their own powers of thought,

[a] Ps. cxix. 91. [b] S. John v. 17.

have seen how they came, they went; they gleamed on the soul, they vanished. What they toiled after, burst upon them, or they caught a glimpse of it, and it was gone, but left some trace behind. They have seen and felt that, not only had they not their powers from themselves but from God, but the very powers which they had, they had continually supplied to them by God. It is well-known how one, drunken with the pride of his power in shewing that God is what He is, boasted that with the same skill he could shew that He was not, and God withdrew from him at once his powers of mind, and he who had just before been eloquent in speech, clear in reasoning, powerful in understanding, mighty in thought, became a senseless idiot. You know how while the word, "[c]Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty," was yet in Nebuchadnezzar's mouth, "there fell a voice from heaven saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee is it spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee."

And as yet I have said nothing. But yet for these very things a heathen too ought continually to thank God and to praise God. For these things the Jews, before our Lord came, did continually praise God. "[d]I will always give thanks unto the Lord; His praise shall be," not now and then, but "continually in my mouth." "[e]My tongue shall speak of Thy Righteousness and Thy praise," not in set words morning and evening, but "all the day long." "[f]O let my mouth," they say to God, "be

[c] Dan. iv. 30, 31. [d] Ps. xxxiv. 1.
[e] Ib. xxxv. 28. [f] Ib. lxxi. 8.

filled with Thy praise, that I may sing of Thy glory and honour all the day long." It is counted as the special sin of Israel in the wilderness, that, on each fresh mercy of God, "[g] then believed they His words, and sang praises unto Him; but within a while they forgat His words and would not abide His counsel."

The heathen were without excuse, if they did not praise God, thank God. Nature itself crieth within us, that we owe ourselves, our very being, all that we are, and all that we have, all within us and without us, to Him Who made us, and all things for us, to use and to enjoy. And therefore nature itself crieth aloud within us, that we should love Him wholly, thank Him wholly, to Whom we owe our very being and all which maketh our being a joy to us. To Him we owe our whole mind and heart and soul and strength; therefore with our whole mind and heart and soul and strength which we owe to Him, we should praise Him. '[h] When shall we cease to praise Him? When we cease to have from Him, for which to praise Him. And since He always blesses us, we must evermore bless Him, and His praise be ever in our mouth.' 'What better,' says a father[i], 'can we have in our hearts, and utter with our mouth than thanks be to God? Nothing can be said more briefly, or heard more gladly, understood more grandly, or done more fruitfully. Whence Christians were even mocked[k] by scoffers, because they so often said, when they met one another, 'Thanks be to God.'

[g] Ps. cvi. 12, 13. [h] S. Bernard. [i] S. Aug. Ep. ad Aurelium.
[k] Id. in Ps. 133. [132. Lat.] n. 6. iv. 115. Oxf. Tr.

And yet if such should be the thanks of mere nature, what should be the thanks of grace! If such be the thanks due that we are, that we live, that we behold heaven and earth, have mind and reason, memory and free-will, what, that we may live to God, that earth is for us, and heaven is ours, this fair earth is but a sojourning-place, where to gain heaven? What, when every thing beautiful in it, every thing which in it we love, is but a picture of some higher beauty and loveliness and love, in store for us if we love God? What, when not heaven alone or earth is ours, but the Father of heaven and earth, God Himself is ours, to be our own God, if we will, for ever and ever?

And should we the less love God for this, and praise God for all this, because they are so common, because so many besides us have them? Nay, rather, we should the more bless God, and praise God, because so many besides us have them. In that ocean of joy, which there shall be in the world to come, we shall have the more joy, because so many whom we shall love, shall have the same or greater joy. Is it not a joy to us here, with the little love which we have, to see others whom we love, have the same joy as ourselves? Does it not so increase our joy, if we deeply love, that we then begin deeply to joy, when those whom our inmost hearts love, share our joy? And there, in heaven, we shall all so deeply love, that our deepest love here will be but a shadow of the lowest love there; and we shall love all, and so shall share the joy of all there with a more inward joy than here we share the joy of those whose joy is as our own.

Yet God meets that other craving of our hearts too, to have a love which shall be our very own. As every blade of grass is different from another, so, and much more, is soul from soul. God, in all eternity, thought of us all in His Infinite Mind; He beheld us one by one, such as, in His goodness, He willed to make us. When there were none but Himself, Father Son and Holy Ghost, He saw and knew every one of us, and loved us with an Infinite love. In His own Infinite Eternity of All-perfect Being, He evermore beheld each one of us; in that Eternity, which was before He created each of you, He beheld you in love. In love, He willed to create you, preserve you, guard you from evil, endow you with gifts of mind and body, redeem *you* with the most precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, make *you* a member of Christ, His own Son; justify you, dwell in you by His Spirit, unite you to Himself; recall you, if you have gone astray from Him. Day by day, He willed to guard you, guide you, put His own thoughts into you, cherish you, warn you, speak to you in His Word or by His preacher or by your conscience, bring His Word home to your soul, comfort you, refresh you, enlighten you, strengthen you. In the Day of Judgement, which shall reveal the secrets of all hearts, and which will reveal us fully to ourselves and God's ways to us, we shall see how specially cared for we have been; how, had there been in the whole creation none but us, God could not have done more for us, than He has done for us. We have a sort of instinct of this. For although many would exchange their outward lot with others, few would wish to exchange them-

selves. They would, if they could, have this or that gift of nature or of grace; they would be what others have become, by using the grace of God. But few, I believe, of those who will be saved at last, would wish to be another instead of themselves. For they are what God made them; they are what God loves.

But since this is so, my brethren, what a loss it is of peace, of rest, of love, of grace, not continually to thank God for all His goodness and love to us.

Thanklessness hinders our prayers from being heard. Thankfulness opens heaven, that God rain down fresh grace upon us, give us what our hearts desire. Therefore God bids us by the Apostle "be careful," i. e. anxious, "about nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God shall rule in your hearts." See how largely He speaks. He would tell us, 'In no one thing need you be anxious, so that in that thing you with faithful hearts pray to God.' You see how the nothing and the every thing stand over against one another. In every thing we may pray to God, and so in nothing need we be anxious, because we tell *Him* our anxieties, Who loves us and cares for us more than we for ourselves. But why then with thanksgiving? Why is thanksgiving so needful to our prayer being heard? This you may ask, nay doubtless have asked it. 'We see the need to ask of God what we would have. It is right, of course, to thank Him when He gives us what we ask Him, but why are we to thank Him beforehand as it were? Why is thanksgiving to go along with our prayer?'

Now I would ask you, what is the end of your praying? That we may have what we want, you will say. True. But what is the great end of your having what you want? What is the end of it all, that God should hear our prayers, give us what we need, turn from us what we fear, but that we should love God, praise God, think of God and of His Goodness? And has not God then heard our prayers already? Has He not given to us countless mercies, secret and open; known and unknown; remembered and forgotten; daily, every-day, tokens of love, and signal, outstanding deeds of His love; with our will or against our will; from our birth unto this hour? There is then no 'thanking God beforehand,' Who daily forecometh us with His benefits. But he would say, Be thankful to God for all His past and present mercies, and so ask, without anxiety and fear, for whatever more you need. For, little prayer as there is to God, there is, I fear less thanksgiving. The ten lepers prayed earnestly, implored, beseeched our Lord to hear them? Humbly, faithfully, devoutly, they cried, "[m] Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us." Of all it might so far be said, 'their faith made them whole.' What then was lacking to the nine, whose thanklessness our Saviour censured? None returned to praise Him save one Samaritan. "[n] There are none returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." The nine doubtless went their way to the priests, glad to be freed from their loathsome plague, joyed to be restored to their friends. Their hearts doubtless swelled with joy; but they joyed in themselves, not in God.

[m] S. Luke xvii. 13. [n] Ib. 18.

They thought not to return to thank and to own Him Who had healed them. What a picture they are of most of us. They had faith; well is it for us, if we have even their faith; but where is the love of the one Samaritan?

And is it not now continually so? The weather is contrary to us. We cannot sow or reap; or what we sow cannot come up, for lack of rain[o]. And heaven seems shut, so that we have no rain, or the earth is bound with frost, or again unceasing rain threatens our harvest, and at last we pray, and God sends us what we need; and what then? Men joy that they have what they wanted, and there is perhaps a passing thought of God, and they go away to enjoy or busy themselves about what God gives them. But does not our Lord say of us, "[p] Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?"

We are stricken with sickness, and we know not whether it be for life or death. We look anxiously, wishing that we had loved God more or served Him better in life, unwilling to depart into God's presence, having served ourselves so much, God so little. God restores us; we speak at best, gratefully to our friends, when we are reminded of it. But where are they who give God lasting thanks for His mercy, when received, in proportion to the earnestness with which they desired it? May not our Lord again ask us "Where are the nine?"

Or we ask for some temporal happiness, which lies very near our hearts, or that God would turn away some temporal evil, at which our soul turns

[o] Preached in a village Church after successive unpromising seasons.

[p] S Luke xvii. 17.

faint; we ask Him like Hannah or like David for his child, with all the earnestness of our souls. In the touching words of Holy Scripture, of Jacob, "Your life is bound up in the lad's life." God hears us, gives what our soul longed for or loved as itself, takes away what the soul dreads far more than itself to depart from life, and where is the thanksgiving to God, which, in our inmost souls, we thought we should give to God, if He should vouchsafe to hear our prayers? "Where are the nine?"

Again, we are struck with some sense of sin. God reveals ourselves to ourselves. Affrighted at ourselves, grieved in soul for past sin, fearful for the future, we betake ourselves to God's mercy, own ourselves, as we are, miserable sinners, implore Him, for Christ's sake, to have mercy upon us and to forgive us. We trust that, for Christ's sake, He has forgiven us. But who well-nigh continues to thank God, as he then thought that he should thank Him? Who well-nigh remembers from what a depth of misery and of Hell God rescued Him? "Where are the nine?"

Again, in the Sacraments God unites us with Himself. We believe, we know with our minds, that in the Holy Eucharist (i. e. in the great Thanksgiving) we 'spiritually eat the Flesh of Christ and drink His Blood, we dwell in Him and He in us.' People prepare themselves in some measure to receive Him, give some set thanks when they have received Him. But who well-nigh remembers it through the day? Who well-nigh thanks Him again and again even through that one day? Where then are the nine?

[q] Gen. xliv. 30.

On this very ground Sacraments often so little profit, because there is so little thankfulness afterwards.

God does hear us again and again, notwithstanding our little thankfulness. He again and again tries to win us to greater thankfulness and love. But whatever we need for soul or body or estate, for ourselves or for those we love, this want of thankfulness for past and present mercies, is the greatest hindrance to our prayers. 'Thanklessness,' says a holy man[q], 'is a parching wind, drying up the fountain of pity, the dew of mercy, the streams of grace.' '[r]It is a destructive thing, an enemy of grace, hostile to salvation. As far as I have any insight, most dear brethren, nothing so displeases God in the sons of grace, the converted, as ingratitude. For it blocks up the way against grace, and where it is, thenceforth grace finds no access, no place. Thinkest thou that to such an one greater grace shall be given, and not rather what he seemeth to have be taken from him? For doth not that rightly seem to be lost which is given to one ungrateful? or may not God repent[s] to have given, what seemeth to be lost? Grateful then and devout must a man be, who longeth that the gift of grace which he hath received should not only abide with him, but be multiplied.'

This then is the secret of true peace, this, of patience in suffering, this gaineth for us what we

[q] S. Bern. in Cant. Serm. 51. n. 6.

[r] In Dom. vi. post Pentec. Serm. 2 de 7 misericordiis.

[s] "Aut dedisse non pœnitet, quod periisse videtur?" This may either be a general maxim, or the word "repent" may be used as in Gen. vi. 6, 7.

ask; this opens to us the treasures of God's grace; through this we are heard for others or for ourselves; through this we become the friends of God; by this we draw down His love for us, if in every thing we give thanks. "In every thing?" Yes, the Apostle says "in every thing." '[u] Be grateful for the least thing, and thou shalt be worthy to receive greater.' In what thou seest and knowest, thank heartily; in what thou knowest not, thank blindly. This thou knowest from God Himself, that He is very good in Himself, and very good to those who love Him; this thou knowest in thine own memory, that He has been very good to thee. All thou hast, all thou art, all thou canst do, is from Him and through Him. Every joy which we have had from childhood until now have been His Gifts. And to whom gave He them? We are the more thankful to men like ourselves, we think it a greater kindness, if those shew us kindness, who are far removed above us in rank or station or intellect or be it what it may. We should think it far more, if one to whom we had done wrong, or been unkind, or ungrateful, were not to reproach us, but to heap fresh kindnesses upon us. And what is God? He Who alone Is. What are we? Well were it if we were only dust and ashes; but we are alas! His rebel ungrateful creatures. If we are a little grateful now, we have been ungrateful heretofore. Yet He was so merciful that He forgave our misdeeds and remembered them not. We each know or ought to know our own hearts, my brethren. We each ought to know, wherein we offended Him. And yet in all things in which we

[u] De imit. Christi iii. 10.

offended Him, we were using His gifts against Himself. His were the powers of mind and body, His gift the free-will, with which, instead of freely and nobly willing what He willed, we willed and did what He hated. And when we were thus ungrateful to His mercy, His mercy it was, that He bore still patiently with us; His mercy, that He suggested or called to us so often to amend; His mercy, that we fell not into worse or more frequent sins; His mercy, that His grace overpowered our resisting will; His mercy, that He gave us repentance; His love, that He forgave us; His goodness, that He has given us power to love Him; His unspeakable tender love for us, miserable sinners, that He willed that we should be able to love Him, be loved by Him, enter into His love, be filled with His love, for ever and ever. O then let us thank Him for His mercies, "and forget not all His benefits." His past mercies are earnests to us of mercies to come. He changes not, except to give us more mercies, as we, through His grace, are changed, and can receive them more. His mercies to us in the past are not past. They are part of His ever-present unchanging love. We do not forget great love done to us by man. Let us thank Him evermore for all His mercies, past, present, and to come; all He has done, all He wills to do for us, all which He wills to be to us, if we will. There is such deep peace and rest in thanking God. You know how it is a rest to the soul, even if it be in silent love, to thank those who love us with more thanks and love than words can utter. Even so does the heart bound towards God, rest in God, in thankful love. Never perhaps is the soul so one

with God, as when it thanks Him. When we pray for forgiveness, we have to think of our sins; when we ask for things which God has not yet given us, we look hopefully up to Him. But when we thank God, then, for the time, we long for no more, we are looking out for no more; we rest and find our full contentment in thanking God, and in having been the object of His love. It is a foretaste of eternal rest and peace, to thank God. In thanking God, we have no thought of any thing else, but the love of God, because He is so good in Himself and to our poor selves. Our whole life might be one jubilee of rest and love, if we were ever thanking God. Now too, as we thank God, our hearts expand with love. The more we thank Him, the more we love Him; the soul feels how sweet it is, above all joy, to love Him and to thank Him; and so we love Him more, and thank Him more, and find that one thought of the love of God is more deep placid joy then there is in the whole world besides. For all other joy, deep as the joy of love is, when it is in God, is bounded; but the peace which comes from the love of God and from thanking God, has no bounds. For so God tells us, "[x] In every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, *and* the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus." You see, brethen, how God promises that the peace shall come with the thanks. We have not to get this peace for ourselves. Tell God, He bids us, your needs, praying Him, thanking Him, "*and*

[x] Phil. iv. 6, 7.

the peace of God *shall* keep your hearts." And what peace? "[y] Peace which passeth all understanding." Peace, which you cannot imagine to yourselves before it comes; peace, which, when it comes, is more than the mind can hold, *shall*, He says, keep, that is, guard your minds from all which could disturb your peace, or draw you away from God; and keep you, where? *in* Christ Jesus, so that cleaving to Him, loving Him, loved by Him, you shall never be separated from Him, but evermore dwell in Him; and our poor thanks now shall be but the first faint notes of those endless Halleluiahs, wherewith we shall evermore thank God, because we shall evermore love God and evermore find in His Infinite Love, more for which to thank Him and to love Him.

[y] Phil. iv. 6, 7.

SERMON XXI.

GOD WITHDRAWS IN LOVING-KINDNESS ALSO.

Song of Sol. v. 2—8.

"*It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled: for My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? my Beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for Him. I rose up to open to my Beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my Beloved; but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone! My soul failed when He spake: I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him, but He gave me no answer. The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell Him I am sick of love.*"

The Song of songs is the tenderest, most condescending voice of our loving Lord to His Church, or to the soul who would love Him in her. He speaks to her beforehand, in His mortal Nature; as the

Word made Flesh, made one of us. He speaks to her, as what He would make her, like Himself, capable of His full love, capable of wholly loving Him. What holy Scripture says elsewhere of His ineffable love, wherewith He yearns over us, as father, mother, friend, is here gathered into one. It is a hidden prophecy of that love wherewith He "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (even the water of Baptism in the Name of the Holy Trinity), "that He might present it unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." He uses, as the image of His love, that deepest union on earth, which He has formed as a "great mystery", a mysterious shadow of the measure of the measureless love of God for the souls which He has made. He veils in tenderest words the mystery which He revealed in the Incarnation of God the Word. He shews how, in espousing our nature by uniting it inseparably with His own, He, by His humiliation, raised it up. He speaks of it no longer as decayed, outcast, captive, enslaved, degraded, as sin had made it, but as placed again in Paradise, a queen, a chaste virgin espoused unto Himself, made "one spirit with" Him: here delighting in His Divine love; at the end, "ascending out of the wilderness" of this world, "leaning upon her Beloved."

Yet even here He speaks of chastisement, chastisement full of love (for "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth"), and issuing in what all chastisement is meant to draw forth, a deeper, chastened, fainting, overwhelmed love. "I am sick of love."

The bride in the Song of songs, you know, is the Church; but it is also, in her, each single soul, which has by the water of Baptism been washed in His Blood, and espoused, S. Paul says, "as a chaste virgin unto Christ", to cleave to Him, belong to Him, and He to her: she to be wholly His, as the End of all her ends, her All in all things; He to be wholly hers, giving His infinite love undivided; for the love of God cannot be divided; for it is Himself. Here then He teaches how He chastens, whether the Church or the single soul, in love, that she may love Him more, and so receive larger love. Even the heathen knew, that we prize our blessings more when we have lost them. When we have them, they are as common things; we regard them as our own. When they seem withheld from us or ready to go, then we prize them and seek how we may retain them. So God manifoldly threatens by the prophets. In that aweful chapter of Ezekiel, in which He describes the wretchedness and defilement in which He found us, the glory in which He clothed us, and how all are often profaned, He says: "I will deal with thee as thou hast done:" she had given to idols the glory wherewith He decked her, and she should be stripped to her shame. So He says by Hosea: "She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which she prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away My corn, and will discover her shame, and make all her mirth to cease." Yet chastisement in this life is aweful mercy. God wounds here, that He may spare for ever. He threatens to remove the candlestick, that we may "be zealous and repent."

He puts to shame, that He may take away shame. He seemeth to cast off, that He may establish His covenant[a]. He brings into the wilderness, that He may speak to the heart[b].

Christ is ever knocking at the heart; in those who have not received Him, that they may receive Him; in those who have received Him, that they may receive Him more fully; in those who are negligent or who relax, that they may rouse themselves; in those who are holy, that they may be holier still. He Himself in the Revelation applies His words in the Song of songs: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." His dwelling in us began when, through the Sacrament of Baptism, He made us members of Himself, and we were re-born by the Holy Ghost. But the degree of that Presence increased or diminished, as we by each act of will, in obedience or disobedience, faith or faithlessness, love of Him or self-love, deeds good or evil, admitted Him more fully, or brought into ourselves guests, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life," together with which He will not abide in us. "Behold I stand at the door, and knock." Christ is within the heart, else we could not open it. He is without it, because it is finite, He Infinite. And so in love and in grace, He may through the Spirit dwell in us ever more largely, because, however He fills us, He must yet overflow. The blessed are immersed in the ocean of His love; yet the ocean embraces them, fills them; it is not contained by them. He is within the heart, but the heart has many folds, many re-

[a] Ezek. xvi. 60. [b] Hos. ii. 14.

cesses, inner chambers, corners and angles; some perhaps unknown to itself; some, on which it does not dare to look; some, which it would keep closed, and with which it would have none to interfere. Our Lord, as the Lord, the Maker, the Husband of the heart, to Whom the whole heart's love is owed, claims it all. All must be open to Him, to be purified by His grace, enlightened by His Spirit, warmed by His love. Within the heart, He knocks at some inner door of the heart, that it too may be opened, and He may enter in more fully still into more and more secret recesses of the soul by enlarged access of His love. He knocks by all things, which teach us to choose Him; that He is All, and all else nothing, except as He is in it, and comes with it, and makes it anything. He knocks by all things, within or without, which scare us or sicken us of things out of Him; by our weariness that they are at best so imperfect, poor, unsatisfying, short-lived; fragments at best, or shadows of His own Infinite Perfections; too often, the devil's spurious and distorted likeness of good; feverish and loathsome joys, for His deep, calm, satisfying joy and peace. But by all things, good or evil, vanity or verity, nothingness or truth, remorse at evil or peace in good; the fading of this world, or glimpses of His own endless abiding Beauty; the dread of hell and of devils, or the brightness of the heavenly choirs and the echoes of the endless Halleluias; by the aweful death of the bad, or the frightfulness of a soul in deep sin, or by the calm beauty of souls in grace, which we half-see entering into the opened gates of Paradise; by the dryness of the ashes whereon we fed for bread, or the sweetness of His hidden Manna; the dreariness

of His absence, or the light and life of His Presence, in something done for Him; by His Word, His preachers, His Sacraments, He stands at the door and knocks. The door then is ever in a manner closed. The heart relapses of itself into earthly things, the every-day things around her, unless Christ continually awake her. He vouchsafes to speak so, Himself of Himself in His members. "He wakeneth mine ear morning by morning." He knocks in our earliest thoughts, in the midst of our daily actions, our meals, our conversations, our doing or our not doing, our willing or our not willing, our thinking or not thinking, our speaking or not speaking, our pain or our ease, our weariness or our refreshment, every resistance to any besetting sin, or our negligence; and *he* may gain great grace who in these petty acts uses God's grace and does aright. By every assent of the will, every obedience to His grace, we open some inner door, and then our Lord says, "I will enter in," for He giveth Himself to every one who receiveth Him; He dwelleth by His Spirit wherever a place has by His grace been prepared for Him: "And I will sup with him, and he with Me." Our Lord, Who rejoiceth over the sheep which was lost, Who speaks of the sweet-smelling sacrifice offered to Him, feedeth, as it were, in the Paradise of the Church, on the fruits of His own grace in the soul, as He saith, "He seeth of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied[c]."

And how must it not be with the soul whom Christ loveth? How doth He not feed it with food, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; in the

[c] Isa. v. 3.

Holy Eucharist, in contemplation, in hope, in love!

"He who loveth, knoweth well
What Jesus 'tis to love."

In the Song of songs, our Lord speaketh of another case, when at His knocking the bride delayeth to open. He finds the soul, or the Church (as it often is) after long peace, when not strung by trouble within or without, at ease, relaxed, unaware that He is not with her as before. He cometh to her in the dark night, when free from the world's care and din; He knocketh, and calleth her by all the names of tenderness, the earnests of His love; "sister," through the mystery of the Incarnation, by which He disdaineth not to call us brethren; "love," for Christ loveth the Church, and S. Paul saith for each single soul, "Who loved and gave Himself for me;" "dove," because the Holy Spirit, Who, in bodily shape like a dove, descended upon our Lord, came down on Him that He might dwell in us, and make us simple like doves; "undefiled," since He had washed her with His own Blood from the defilement of sins, in which she lay, and made her clean in Himself. And to all these He adds "My," not once only, but with each word, to shew her the more that she is His very own. "My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled." All, which she is, she is as being His; the more blessed that she has all from Him. The voice is not the voice of the Lord in majesty, but the still small voice, the whisper of love. It is not the voice of the Lord of Hosts, which "shaketh the wilderness," but "the voice of thy Beloved," the voice of Jesus. He says, "Open to Me, My sister;" 'I have joined Myself to

thee by taking thy nature; I have joined thee to Me, by imparting to thee Mine. Thou art born, like Eve, through the Sacrament from My wounded Side. I opened My heart for thee; open thine to Me. There should be no closed bar to shut out Me. I cleansed thee from thy defilements; I come to make thee cleaner still.' He comes to her, as one shut out by others. Jesus is shut out by the Jews, by the heathen. Yea, rather, look where you will, among rich and poor, the refined or the degraded, the proud or the debased, every where around you, you see those who shut out Jesus. He comes to be received, because, as in the days of His Flesh, He had not where to lay His Head. His own received Him not. "My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night." Cold and dark is the world which receives him not; the dew which would distil from His sacred Head, refreshing the weary, hangs stiff and cold, where "iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold." But the more would it melt in love and grace, removing all dryness and barrenness, and quenching the feverish heat of the day in those who open to Him. The bride delays. The soul, or the Church, after long rest and peace, is apt to relax and be unstrung. The bride was lying listless, and would not arouse herself at His first call. "Long repose," says an early father[d], "had corrupted the discipline which came down to us from the Lord, and so the Divine judgment awakened our faith from a declining and (should I so speak) an almost slumbering state." The sluggish soul fears often to go forth to some

[d] S. Cyprian de Lapsis, Treatises p. 156. Oxf. Tr.

fresh encounter with the Lord's foes. She shrinks from struggles, lest she should in some measure be worsted; she will not fight, lest she should be wounded; she thinks all is well enough, and she will not do on her robe, the righteousness and love of Christ, lest her feet, while she touches the dust of this earth, be defiled in the conflict to which she is called. "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" Alas! 'well enough' is the grave of all growth in grace, of enlarged love, of hope of glory, often of the soul itself, in hell. One[e], eminent for piety, saw, by God's shewing, the place in hell which would have belonged to her, had she not obeyed His Voice.

But God leaves not thus the soul at once. Since His tender Voice failed, He put forth His Hand. He lays not on us at once His heavy Hand. "He suffereth not His whole displeasure to arise." But still He touches and wounds her, though in love: "My Beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door." Not as when "He stretched out His Hand against His people in His anger" to smite it[f]. He puts it forth only, as when He touched Job or Jacob in trying them. The soul opened not to Him at His gentle call: He removed what opposed the entrance to it by His chastening. So He takes away what we have set up instead of Him, the idols of our hearts, within us or without, and "chastens us whereby we have offended."

His chastening touch, which hardened Pharaoh and hardens the obdurate, awakens the slumbering soul which loves. You who have loved, know how

[e] S. Theresa. [f] Isa. v. 35; Ezek. xvi. 17.

the inmost soul trembles and quivers with love. "My bowels," the inmost affections, "were moved," yearned for Him. The soul now rose to open: she who had lain listlessly and delicately, laid aside all sloth, arose quickly. "Our acts are vain, unless God aid us; they are none, unless He rouse us." She rises, as one dead with Christ; her hands, i. e. her actions, drop with myrrh; each single act (her fingers), with sweet-smelling myrrh. Myrrh is mortification. The wise men offered to the Infant Jesus myrrh, prophetically of His Death and Burial; wine mingled with myrrh was offered to Him at His Passion: in myrrh and aloes was His sacred Body buried. The removal of the decayed or diseased part is life to the body. Death to sin is life to the soul. There is no recovery without deadening, or cutting off, or casting out the cancer which preyed on our life. Sin drives out God and closes the soul to Him. Sensuality, self-indulgence, self-will, pride, vanity, unlove, and the whole host of sins, are in every degree, so far as they still prevail, bars to God's entrance; by deadening them, the soul unbars herself, or some inner part of herself, to His Presence and His love. And so, when she returns to herself, "her fingers, with sweet-smelling myrrh, are upon the handles of the lock," which she unbars.

But God would not be so precious to the soul, were He won back at once; nor is it fitting that the Lord of Heaven and earth should be put aside and taken back, as people in their caprice deal with the toys of the world. The soul which had delayed to open to Christ, seeks Him, but finds Him not at once. "I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself and was gone,"

or "circled round[g], and passed away." He was absent, yet present; He had left her, but He had not forsaken her; He was unseen, yet around her; He was not away, while He seemed to be gone. He "encircled" her, as unwilling to depart, or leave her to her foes or to herself; He hovered around her as ready to return to her. He passed away, only to draw her onward and upward to Himself. But to sight and sense He was away.

"I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him, but He gave me no answer." These are the very words, by which God speaks of His final forsaking of those, who will not hearken to Him while He may be found. So He speaks of Himself in the Day of final trouble and anguish in the Book of Proverbs[h]; so of the hypocrite[i]; of Judah[k], whose "hands were full of blood;" so, again and again, of those whom He casts off[l].

He gave her then no answer within, no token of His Presence, no sign that He ever would hear her; her prayers fell back dead upon her, as if she could not be heard; the heavens above her were as brass; the clouds hung heavy upon her soul; God was in them, but was hid: "Thou hast covered Thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through."

And what without? She found no help from God. What from within? Few understand the state of such a soul as this; one who burns for more love, yet finds no comfort. "My soul," she says, "failed," literally "went forth" out of herself to Him she

[g] חמק i. q. חרב. Kim. [h] Prov. i. 24—28.
[i] Job. xxvii. 9. [k] Isa. i. 15.
[l] Job. xxxv. 12; Jer. xi. 11; Ezek. viii. 18; Mich. iii. 4; Zech. vii. 13.

loved, "when He spake." She was out of herself, for longing and for love. The world thinks such an one mad; they advise the soul to distract itself; they speak of over-much religion; they would send it back to the swine-husks of this world, to satisfy its immortal longings after God. But even "the keepers of the city," those whom God hath set as watchmen over the city of God often wound such a soul. Some wound her healthfully, some unskilfully. She *must* be wounded by all things, who is so keenly alive to sorrow. Some mistake her; some, while they take away what remains of earthliness pierce her. The holy Apostles in the Divine Scriptures, who guard the heavenly city from error or mischief, pierce her. They take away the veil, and laying her open to herself, set her gaze the freer to behold her Lord.

And what does she? She languishes for love; and feeling unworthy to speak to Him, she turns to the holy souls, the heirs with her, and daughters here of the heavenly Jerusalem[m]. "I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved," at whatever time ye are nearest to Him, and His Presence is most vouchsafed to you, remember me. "Tell Him, I am sick of love." She needed to be healed of her wounds by His Wounds, to be clothed by Him, be comforted by Him, brought back by Him, but she needs more than all these His gifts; she needs that, with which she would have all besides—His Presence. "I am sick of love." And then she meditates on Him, dwells one by one on all His Beauty and loving-kindnesses, and as she

[m] The daughters of Jerusalem are such as are from time to time admitted more nearly to God, and so members of the Church Militant.

thinks and speaks of Him, the fire kindles, and at the last she knows; "I am my Beloved's; and my Beloved is mine."

Yet while she cried, "I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him, but He gave me no answer," she seemed to herself, she might have seemed to others, to be deserted by Him. What was the difference between her state and that of those with whom God dealeth in wrath? What are the tokens of a seeming, what of a real absence of God from the soul? and what its remedies?

Ye, doubtless, most of you, know in some measure the state which God here comforts, as "cast down but not forsaken." Most have known how, when God has called the soul to pray, and she, from indolence or other cares, delays her hour of prayer, her prayers are cold and dead. He called, and she heard not; she calls, and He makes as though He heard not, that she might know what an unworthy thing it is, to expect that the Lord Whom the heavenly hosts adore, when He calls her to speak with Him, and He with her, should await her leisure. Some have found how Holy Communions have become cold, and they have scarcely, or not at all, perceived their present Lord, because, when He has come to them, they have neglected Him, and turned away to the things of this world, or forgotten their Heavenly Food amid their earthly nourishment, or the Divine Guest of their soul in earthly converse. Some have felt, how having once "tasted this heavenly gift, and the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come," they have, although not "fallen away," relaxed and "left their first love." It was, in the person of

S. Timothy, as is supposed, that S. John was bidden so to speak to the Church of Ephesus[n]. Our souls are not the home of grace, that it should, without effort on our part to detain it, remain there. Its home is God; it comes to us, visits us, dwells with us, but only if we with diligence keep it and use it. We are ascending the mount of God; if we relax, we slip back. But then there follows a time of dreariness. God hides His Face and the soul is chilled; He withdraws His Light, and the soul is dark.

Some too have known a drearier state yet; how, in the freshness of their Baptismal grace, when they were yet new from the Hands of God, God called them like Samuel, and they hearkened for a while perhaps, and drew near to Him, and were glad to be with Him, and then they came under other influences and were less with God, and heard His Voice no more. And others have, with a warm glow of feeling, gone to God whenever their feelings were touched, but when hard duty was to be done, they shrank back. Others have all their lives longed to serve God devotedly, but they blinded themselves by sin, and saw not that, all the while, they were giving to God but half a heart—half to the world, or the flesh or the devil. Alas! who can count the thousand, thousand ways in which persons have not hearkened to the Voice of God? And when they are awakened by His mercy, they are still, for their soul's health, chastened by His judgement. "I will sing, O Lord, of mercy and Judgement." They feel far off from God, and fear, being what they are, to approach Him; they feel bad, and dare not come nigh His Majesty; cold and distracted, and dread to

[n] Rev. ii. 4.

offend Him by their coldness and distractions. They mistake sinful thoughts or feelings, although they hate them, for their own, and think that God cannot love them, or dwell in such a soul. They cannot go back to the world, for they have felt its nothingness; they dare not go to God, feeling their own hatefulness in His sight. All faith, hope, love, contrition seem to be gone, or never to have been. All things of earth seem sternly real; all of heaven, unreal. They pray, but as to One who is not. The heart will not melt into tears, even over its own misery. It seems like a rock, and no rod touches it to make the waters flow. Nothing feeds its affections. Such an one goes to prayer as a sick man to his food, not because he relishes it; he loathes, yet takes it that he may not die. He walks in darkness which may be felt, and is shrouded with it. Everything is parched to his touch. The hour of prayer is slow, long, wearisome, insupportable. Countless crowds of thoughts chase through the soul, and drive it back from God; or it is barren and dry, without being able to draw from the well of the heart an aspiration to Him. It is unfit for all duty, within or without; it is a burden to itself, feels itself so to others; it is impatient that it is what it is, and is not what it would be; and cannot either unmake or remake itself. It knows not how to live, and dreads to die. What if God have departed, and, with the Fountain of grace, grace have failed, never to return? It sees graces in all around, but itself is like the dry place, when the barn-floor was moist. All things work together for good to those who love God. How can they hope, in whom there seems no ray of child-like feelings, or glow of love?

Yet they *are* severed from those whom God hears not in wrath, although they know it not, by their love. They may *know*, that they are severed from such, by their pain. God never closeth His ear here to those who cry to Him for Himself. Where there is pain, there is life: where there is life, there is God. For God is the life of the soul.

The remedies then for this state are taught us in the Bride. First; she opened that which was closed before. Secondly; she mortified what she found amiss. Thirdly; when she found not Him whom her soul loved, she sought Him perseveringly in the broad places of the city, in active duty. Fourthly; she was not hindered by discouragement. Fifthly; when she knew no more how to seek, she sent, exhausted, the aspiration to Him: "I am sick of love." Her heart is faint, because she loves; because He is the life of the soul; and without Him she is sick unto death. That one word speaks all her ills, all her need, as Martha and Mary sent to Jesus, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick."

It is well then with thee, thou weary soul, even because it does not seem well with thee. What God doth with thee, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." He Who, through suffering, is working in thee humility and hatred of sin, is preparing in thee a dwelling place for Himself, "Who dwelleth in the humble and contrite heart," and will compensate His seeming absence by a fuller Presence. Desolations of soul, even though chastisements of sin, are among God's choicest means of enlarged grace. By these God teaches the soul how unutterable an evil it is to be separated from Him. He teaches her to hate the memory of

all sin, to cleanse herself from all lesser faults, which come between her and God. He teaches her her own nothingness, and to look for all from Him, not by any law, nor as requital, but of His own mere goodness. He stirs the inmost heart, kindles her longings, makes her love Himself for Himself, increases her desires, that when they are increased and enlarged, He may fill them.

Dull not then thy pain by any distraction of earthly consolation. Leave not any wonted exercise of piety, because it is now insipid and lifeless; relax not in any strife, because it seems fruitless; shrink not to minister in love to others, because thou seemest dead in thyself; leave not thy wonted times of prayer. If thou canst not go in gladness, go in sorrow; if not upborne by consolation, go desolate; if without any heart, yet to do His Will; if no good thought come, repel the evil; if thou canst not *speak* to God, *look* to Him as a servant to the hands of his master; if distracted, pray Him to knit thee in one; if thou seem repulsed, pray Him to fix thy soul on Him; if the affections seem dead, hold fast by thy will; forget thyself and remember God, and God shall make "snow like wool, and hoar-frost like ashes," and "ice as morsels" of bread[p]. Thy coldness shall kindle thee, and dryness shall make thee fruitful, and barrenness shall feed thee. Only let Him not go, until He bless thee. 'Many,' says S. Bernard, 'through their whole life stretch out towards the grace of devotion, yet never reach it. Yet to them, if they strive piously and perseveringly, so soon as they depart from the body, that is given them which in this life, by God's dispensation,

[p] Ps. cxlvii. 16, 17.

is denied them. Grace alone bringeth them thither, whither with grace they stretched forward. For it is not to be believed, that faithful servants are always deprived of the sweetness and grace of devotion, unless without it by a more secret and sometimes safer way, He gave them proficiency in virtue, and purity of soul.'

And so, brethren, for the Church itself. The Bride, you know, is even specially the Church. Of her then too, it is true, that He, Who purchased her with His own Blood, may, in love, chastise unfaithfulness by seeming to withdraw Himself; He may be around her to guard her, although He hide His Face from her; He may allow even the watchmen of the city to beat her, and take away from her the veil, the outward token of pure espousal unto Him; and yet, the ends of His chastisement accomplished, He will return to her in deeper blessing.

What then is to be done? What did the Bride? She opened her heart wherein she had closed it, she sought her Lord in the streets and lanes of the city, unheeding, though the keepers of the city beat her, redoubling her cries, because the Lord seemed not to hear her.

And if for thyself or the Church, "the waters enter into thy soul, and thine eyes fail for looking upward," remember how His Eyes were glazed on the Cross for thee; remember His mysterious cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Remember how in that hour He, for thy sake and as an ensample to thee, in bearing that deepest suffering, withheld from His Soul the consolations of the Godhead, with which it was personally united, and allowed not the streams of His everlasting joy,

with which He gladdened all the heavenly hosts, to come down upon His Mind. Remember how, at that hour, He, amid all the weight of human sin and weakness and misery, was bearing thine own; and so unite thine own anew with His; cry to Him too, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? and the merits of His Passion shall encompass thee, and His Blood shall cleanse thee; and while thou so cleavest to Him, neither "life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers," yea not that very faintness of thine own heart, "shall separate thee from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This Sermon was preached at S. Barnabas, Pimlico, June, 1850. The writer was asked to add something to enhearten some who were gravely disquieted by the Gorham Judgement. This is now omitted, partly as out of keeping with the rest of the sermon; partly because the writer attached too much weight to the decision of an unauthorised secular Court, intruding into the province of the Church, as likely, to affect, unless resisted, not discipline only, but our faith. He overlooked that the teaching of the Church in her Catechism, and at the Baptism of every child, was one continuous ever repeated resistance.

SERMON XXII.

GOD ADVANCES HIS KINGDOM THROUGH MAN.

S. Matt. vi. 10.

"*Thy Kingdom come.*"

We have said these words to God, my brethren, from earliest infancy. All of us who had any devotion have said them to Him twice a day at the least; some of us, many times a day. Christians of old took to the letter our Lord's words, "[a] When ye pray, say, Our Father;" and so, whenever they prayed, they prayed to the Father through the Son in the Son's own words. With those words, they (as they in their own simple language termed it) '[b] inwardly singing it, ever sent up to God Himself a message, regarding every need a man may have, either for this life or for that to come.' And so it has come down to all of us, that we from our very childhood have, at least on the Lord's Day, said very often to God, "Thy Kingdom come." Some of us have said it for ten, twenty, thirty, forty years. The older among us have said it, some for fifty, some

[a] S. Luke xi. 2.

[b] Laws of king Cnut n. 22. Thorp's Anglosaxon Laws ii. 373.

for sixty years; some even to the common limit of man's life; some "[c] by reason of strength," not for seventy only, but for eighty years. What a volume of prayer, my brethren, if day by day we prayed aright! What an army, besieging heaven and prevailing over and conquering Almighty God, do a man's "Our Fathers" make, if, through a long life, he have, day by day, fervently, earnestly, collectedly, perseveringly, sent them up, in the Name of the Incarnate Son, pleading His merits and His Redeeming Blood, to the Love of the Almighty, All-wise, All-good, Father! We count it little, each time we say it, to say to God, "Thy Kingdom come." Most of us, alas! have said it at times, not or scarce knowing, scarce remembering, what we have been saying, or to Whom! And yet, as minute by minute make up the sum of our lives, as deed by deed, word by word, thought by thought, make up the sum of deeds thoughts and words, which will appear for us or against us at the Judgement Day, so each "Our Father," which we say earnestly in time here below, will re-echo in our endless Halleluias before the Throne of God, in that Blessed-making sight of Himself as He Is, in all eternity.

But what have we meant, all these days and years, when we said to God, "Thy Kingdom come?" What do we wish for or pray for? And is the wishing or praying enough? Or, if we wish and pray, is there ought besides, which we ought to do?

To wish from the heart and pray with the whole soul, is enough, if there is nothing else for us to do.

[c] Ps. xc. 10.

Prayer is, in itself, a mighty work, and has mighty power with God. Moses' prayer conquered Amalek more than the armies of Joshua and Israel. Joshua's prayer stopped the sun and moon in their courses, and slew more of the enemies of God, than the sword. Prayer gave to Samson in his weakness more strength than he had had in his life. At Moses' silent prayer in his heart, the Egyptians who pursued Israel "[d] sank, like lead, in the mighty waters;" at Hezekiah's, the whole army of Sennacherib, when ready to destroy, was, in one night, extinct. Prayer restored the dead to life, "[e] stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire." Prayer, under the Gospel, changed wolves into lambs; the persecutor and destroyer into the preacher of the Gospel of peace; Saul full of fury, into Paul, the chosen vessel of the love of God, who could even wish himself separated from the presence of Christ, if so, more of his brethren, by whom himself was hated, might know and love his and their Redeemer. Earnest, intense prayer "[f]cast out devils," "saved the sick," burst the Apostle's bonds, gained utterance for an Apostle and free course for the Gospel. It ascends to the Presence of the Eternal Father, and asks and gains of Him all it asks; for it pleads the Name, the Merits, the Promise of His Co-equal, Incarnate Son.

But then all prayer to God implies that we act as we pray. God wills to knit in one His own work and our's. He wills so to unite His creatures with Himself, that He would bring about His own work through them. He could, if it seemed to Him good,

[d] Exod. xv. 10. [e] Heb. xi. 33, 34. [f] S. Mark xvi. 17, 18.

convert all to Himself by His one word, as He converted Saul in his journey to Damascus. It might seem, that so would His glory be the more seen, if any who notoriously hated and opposed the Gospel, were, by His converting grace, suddenly and openly won to the faith, and "[g] preached the faith which once they destroyed." It would avail as a display of His power; but it would not effect the purpose of His love. Every where, in our own souls, towards our neighbours, towards the Church or the whole race of His redeemed, He wills to blend in one our poor love with His boundless ocean of love; our weak efforts with His own Almightiness; our petty abilities with the depths of His Wisdom; our little mercifulnesses with His own Endless loving-kindness; our poor human words with the Fire of His Spirit, which He came on earth to kindle. Nay more! God so willeth to admit us into a part of His own Divine work, that *now* He scarce willeth to accomplish any thing, save through us. He willeth mostly so to hide His own glory, that He doth not accomplish Himself one part, the great outstanding works of His grace and love, leaving to us, as it were, the gleanings of His Vintage; but He doth well-nigh every thing *for* man *through* man. In the depths of His Wisdom and His Counsel, all things work His will. Even those who oppose His Will, accomplish, against their own will, His Will which they oppose. We *can* do nothing without Him. For in Him we "[h] live and move and have our being." *His* is the Only Power and Wisdom and Knowledge and Love; and only from His Wis-

[g] Gal. i. 23. [h] Acts xvii. 28.

dom and Power and Love can any created being have any love or power or wisdom lodged in them. In the beginnings of the Gospel He willed, for our sakes, to show once for all that the Gospel was "[i] not of men," but from Himself. He worked, through man, works, exceeding all power of man; He spake, through man, words exceeding all wisdom of man; He declared things to come, surpassing all knowledge of man; He accomplished what He had Himself foretold, in ways to which human wisdom could never reach, transcending the compass of man's intelligence; that all, then and thereafter, might know that He alone, in Whom is the Beginning and the End, had worked for man both the beginning and the end; declaring beforehand what He Alone could accomplish, and completing through Divine Might the counsels of Divine Wisdom. Even then too He wrought, through man, His wondrous work of love for man. Nay, what was the Incarnation of the Son of God Himself, but His Will to accomplish our Redemption itself, "[j] through that Man Whom He had ordained," remedying man's disobedience through the obedience of man? Our dear Lord's sacred Manhood obeyed, suffered, bore for us the deserts of our sins, died: the Godhead, wherewith that Manhood was united, gave to that Obedience, Suffering, Death for us, a value Infinite. And after that pattern, He still worked invisibly, what visibly was wrought through man. Apostles spake; but the Spirit of their Father spake in them: they wrought miracles; but it was "[k] in the Name

[i] Gal. i. 1.

[j] Acts xvii. 31. [k] Ib. viii. 16.

of Jesus:" they taught in words given to them by God; but God opened to receive their words the hearts which closed themselves not against them. God did every thing, and He willed that man should do every thing: but God did it, as He Who Alone hath in Himself Power and Might and Wisdom and Goodness; men, as living instruments of His Will, willing freely, through the Grace of God, the Will of God.

And so, as time rolled on, He willed to allow His Kingdom to shine out or to be darkened, to widen or to be narrowed; to enfold the known world, or to be hemmed in and struggle, as it were, almost for life; to exhibit His glory in all purity and fervour of zeal and glow of love, or to be put to shame through the lukewarmness and flagrant vices and deadness of those who in words owned Him as their King, but in deeds and in truth denied Him,—all these changes and ebbs and flows of His Grace He allowed to be, as man was faithful or disobedient to His Will.

So is it as to His three-fold Kingdom, whereby God reigns in the souls where He dwells. *One* Kingdom there is, where He admits not man to a share; that, in which He rules and overrules all created things by their will or against their will to accomplish that which He in His Infinite Wisdom "[l] determined before to be done." According to that kingdom, He rules in Hell as in Heaven. Evil spirits in their rebellious blasphemies are subservient to His Will. To Him "[m] bows every knee, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things

[l] Acts iv. 28. [m] Phil. ii. 10.

under the earth." All fulfil His Will, by fulfilling it *with* their own will, or, *against* their own will, and because they rebel against it, enduring it.

[n] Thou hast a Name and hast a Power
The height and depth to sway;
And Angels bow and Devils cower
In reverence or dismay;

but O how different, gladly to serve Him, where, with joy unutterable, they sing, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,' or to subserve Him while cursing Him; to feel the sweetness of His Presence, loving Him and beloved by Him, or to endure it, while hating it and unable to escape from it!

But whether in the Coming of that blissful Kingdom of His Love in the single heart which He has made and redeemed and sanctified for Himself, and which yields itself wholly to Him; or in the whole Church and Company of the Redeemed, in which He dwells in grace, and which He knits into one invisible Divine Oneness by His Spirit and by His Sacraments; or in the final Kingdom of His Glory, where, all sin and infirmity and fear of falling past, He shall reign in all the Choirs of angels and men made perfect, in the Unchangeable fulness of His transporting Love,—He wills so to employ us, His creatures, in His work of love, that through us His Kingdom should come in the single soul, through us should His Kingdom throughout the whole world be enlarged, through us should the Kingdom of His everlasting glory be hastened.

Through us His Kingdom comes in the single soul; that Kingdom, of which He says, "[o] the King-

[n] Advent Hymn. [o] S. Luke xvii. 21.

dom of God is within you," because His grace is within us, His Spirit is within us, He our King and our God is within us, as He saith, "[p] In that Day ye shall know that I am in My Father and ye in Me and I in you." Through the ministry of others, not through ourselves, we received the Sacrament whereby we were made members of Christ; the teaching, through which we learnt to know God, to believe in Him, to love Him, and (if we so did) to obey Him. The inward part was wholly of God and the grace of God, and the fruit of the Spirit of God; but all so came to us through man, that it is even a marked and unusual thing, if God works directly on the soul without employing herein the faithfulness of man. He willeth that the love of Himself and of our fellow men should so be inworked together in us; in that we receive well-nigh all things for soul body or estate, *from* Him, *through* men. He makes us all in some way to depend upon one another, that, by hanging in some measure on one another, we may the more love one another. He Whose laws are the ever-present working of His Wisdom, binds not Himself down to them, but acts according to them or without them, as to Him seems good. But for the most part, He teaches, but through our parents; He trains us, but through the guidance of our elders; He warns us, but through the warning voice of older love. He speaks to our souls, but mostly through His word spoken in His Name. He recalls us, through the weariness often and unsatisfyingness and hopeless restlessness of a life of sin, or through His inward voice of terror or

[p] S. John xiv. 20.

of hope, but mostly He points the call through one whom He has already taught to love Him. How does He direct the shaft of His Word right to the heart of some one, whose needs the preacher knows not of! Without Him man speaks to the air; but He Himself drives, "[q] even to the dividing asunder of soul and body," the word spoken in His Name, through His Spirit, by those who know not whereto He will use it.

The soul is in a manner His spiritual Kingdom. It is made in the likeness of Himself; it is formed to reflect Himself. He rules it, guides it, speaks to it, stirs it, saddens it, comforts it, strikes it as dead, that it may live to Him. We see the more that all which is done to it and in it, is His Doing, in that man's greatest efforts for man are in themselves of no avail, and that, where God worketh effectually, what He does is so far beyond human power. Man speaketh, God striketh home: man saith what is true, but what has, thousands of times, swept by unheeding ears; God, through it, pierces the soul through and through: man argues, though with reasons most powerful, to deaf ears and blind eyes; God openeth the eyes, and man is entranced, as it were, with the clearness of the sight spread before him, and wonders at his past blindness.

But since in single individuals He binds together His own agency and our free-wills, ensouled by His grace; much more in the coming of His Kingdom of grace, through the Church. For the Church is made up of individuals, whom He by His Sacrament makes members of His mystical Body, until they,

[q] Heb. iv. 12.

by viciousness of life, or by casting away His truth, cast themselves out of it. In the Church, as in the world, His presiding Hand shapes the rough-hewed ways of man's shortsightedness. But the well-being, growth, decay, revived life of the Church depends upon the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of her collective members, the earnestness of their prayers, their loyal devotedness to Christ their Head, their self-sacrifice, their zeal. The whole being of the Church, her inward life, her adherence to her trust, has seemed at times to hang upon some single life. And yet when its work was done, God raised another, and another, and another, as in the days of the judges, to effect the deliverance which He willed. How has the Gospel spread from land to land? Mostly God has raised up men with Apostolic spirit, who burned with zeal for souls, whose names have often lived as the Apostles of the countries which they converted. "[r] God spake the word; great was the company of those who published it." He awoke them, He stirred their souls, He sent them forth like arrows from His bow: He accompanied their words of fire to the mark to which He sent them. He melted hearts before them; He made rough places smooth and the crooked straight. He bowed mind and soul before His message of love to them, so that none could resist the grace and power, with which they spake. But He willed that what He revealed through man, should be propagated through man. He willed to call forth our love, our longing, our thankfulness for His Mercies to us, our burning zeal for His glory and for the souls of those for whom,

[r] Ps. lxviii. 11.

with us, Christ died. He willed that throughout eternity we should be bound together, not only as His creatures, or through the Oneness of His Spirit in us all; or by our own oneness of relation to Him, our Father and our God; nor only by all our natural ties of friendship or of love; but by the endless memories of that sacred love that, under Him and through Him, we were helped onward by one another to that unspeakable bliss. Even here, how does one good word live in our souls, which was perhaps a turning-point in our lives, which checked us in some wrong course, which opened our eyes to something amiss in us, or to some perilous rock on which we were driving! How much more then, when our whole past life shall, in its every want, be present to our souls, and we shall know, in the clear light of God's truth, what emperilled, what forwarded our salvation, what perhaps saved us from perishing! How much more will it be an ever-living bond there, how shall it be a part of that debt of love, which the Apostle allows us to owe, which we ever pay yet never discharge, because love ever loves to pay it. How will it deepen the glow and loveliness of mutual love, to think with that ever-present consciousness of gratitude, 'this or that I owed to thee,' 'this or that grace God formed in me through thee!' How will S. Paul's disciples, of whom he says, "[s]our crown of rejoicing are ye in the Lord," "[t]my joy and crown," joy in him who gladly spent and was spent for them! How shall we ourselves rejoice to see that glorious Apostle, who, thirsting for our salvation, pressed on to our then distant and barbarous land,

[s] 1 Thess. ii. 19. [t] Phil. iv. 1.

that we too might know Christ and His redeeming love, and have hope in Him! How shall we then joy in all that glorious Company of Prophets, Evangelists, Apostles, Martyrs, Teachers, through whose inspired writings, examples, sufferings, holy teaching, our souls have ever been taught any lesson of love for our Lord and God! Nothing then will be too little to increase our joy and love; for every the least thing shall be full of God: nothing shall be so great, that it could interfere there with the love of God: for we shall see and feel that His love only is infinite, and that all other love is lighted by His, radiates from Him.

Yea, the Coming of that very Kingdom of perfected bliss shall be hastened by the faithfulness of man to the grace of God. That very Kingdom waiteth for its Coming, only for the completion of God's elect. To the martyrs which cried to God, "[u] How long, O Lord, holy and true?" it was answered, "that they should rest, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." Some of our Father's many mansions have not yet received the full number of their inhabitants: some vacant thrones around the eternal Throne of God are as yet unwon: some there are, whom our Lord awaiteth to bid to enter into His joy, and to sit down with Him in His Throne.

But is it then to magnify ourselves and man's poor deeds, that I speak thus of the share which God vouchsafes to man, when He calls him to be a "fellow-worker with" Him? Nay, rather but to

[u] Rev. vi. 10, 11.

speak of God's condescension, Who, in all ways wills to unite us to Himself, Whose is the Glory and the Power and the Majesty and the Victory; from Whom all things come; but Who willeth to impart to us all which is His, to be glorified and loved in us and through us.

But God's condescension involves our corresponding duty. He wills, that through the power of His Grace, and for the Merits of our Crucified Lord which alone make us acceptable to Him, by aid of man, accepted in Him, man should be brought to the knowledge of Him and should be saved. He wills, that through the Merits of His All-holy Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, our words and deeds, wrought and spoken through His grace, should reach, affect, win to Him our fellow-sinners. He wills, that our earnest prayers, our alms, every faithful word or deed of ours, should advance His Kingdom and His glory. No one is shut out. "[v] Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." The "[w] Hosannah to the Son of David" at His triumphant entry into Jerusalem was loudly swelled by children's voices. The prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," mounts up from thousand thousand voices unceasingly to His throne, and draws down the graces which hasten or enlarge His Kingdom. Each several voice, which joins with earnest longing, deepens that swelling peal, which, in the Son's own words and Name makes sweet music in the ears of the Eternal Father. As we long, so we have; by virtue of His most true promise, "[x] Whatsoever

[v] Ps. viii. 2.

[w] S. Matt. xxi. 9. [x] S. John xvi. 9.

ye shall ask My Father in My Name, He will give it you."

And now, on this day in which "Thy Kingdom come," has first gone up from this building[y] dedicated to His Name, as the first note, we hope, of one long harmony of prayer and praise, which shall at length die away, yea rather shall be caught up in that triumphant jubilee of thanksgiving, "[z] Now *is come* salvation and strength and the Kingdom of God and the power of His Christ," God forbid that in words only we should say, "Thy Kingdom come."

Another Advent has dawned, telling us anew that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; very near at hand to some of us, not far removed from all. When that Kingdom does come, will it come *to* us, or *upon* us? It will come *to* us, if we have indeed prayed for it, prayed that we might have a share in it, and, as we could, by prayers, by alms, by examples, by receiving the light of God within us, promoted it. O may there be none among us, who while they say, "Thy Kingdom come," by their deeds belie their words, longing that that Kingdom should not come, because they have rebelled against its King and have not repented. May none of us be slothful servants, saying listlessly, "Thy Kingdom come," yet asking, as if they cared for nothing less. But may God give us grace so to use faithfully what He has for this short time entrusted to

[y] Preached at the consecration of a Village Church. What was temporary or local, is omitted.

[z] Rev. xii. 10. [a] S. Matt. x. 8.

us, that we may see in that Day, with joy, those whom our prayers, our alms, our words, our deeds, our lives, have holpen to love our God, Who hath washed us from our sins in His own Blood, and has made us kings and priests to offer up ourselves as living sacrifices to God, and hereafter to reign with Him in that unspeakable glory and joy, where with the Father and the Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth.

SERMON XXIII.

THE MINUTENESS AND INDIVIDUALITY OF GOD'S JUDGEMENT.

HEB. ix. 27.

"*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement.*"

AGAIN, the dying year preaches death, and the thought of death preaches judgement to come. Again, we review those who, during this division of our life, have passed out of sight, and wonder, how variously death has fallen; how some have been left, who seemed likely, in God's Providence, to be taken, (one perhaps, in part, through the loving prayers of some of you[a]); many have been taken, whom we should have expected to have been left.

But to us who remain, whether we are at the beginning or the close of life, there is this in common, that another portion of our life here is gone. We talk commonly of 'increasing years,' but 'increasing years' are, in fact, 'decreasing years.' Of the term which God's Providence has allotted to each of us, one more period is gone irrecoverably. To us it is

[a] In a severe illness of the preacher, prayers had for some time been asked for him in the Cathedral where this sermon was preached on Advent Sunday, 1873.

dead, except in its effects on our minds and souls; in the sight of God, to Whom past and future are alike present, it is present still; it lives too in our memories. Both what we now remember and what we have for the time forgotten is graven there in characters ineffaceable; capable, as we know, of being revived; sleeping, it may be, now; yet capable, if evil, of starting up like ghastly spectres before us; if good, then, as the gift of God and the fruit of His Good Spirit, earnests, through His Mercy, of future good.

But what a great army it is, borne with us, bearing us;—whither? We all know, 'To the judgement seat of Christ.' There they must appear, as witnesses for us or against us. It is well to bring this vividly before us. If during this one past year, since last Advent Sunday again reminded of our Lord's Second Coming, (when He shall come to judge the world and the people with rightness,) each of our days had but 17 waking hours, then there have been, in this one period of our life, above 6000 hours, in each of which were duties, done or neglected; thoughts, of various degrees of rightness or, it may be, of wrongness, under every head of sin; pride, vainglory, ambition, worldliness, vanity, unlove, discontent, anger, envy, jealousy, (to speak of spiritual sins only) indulged or rejected; words, of unlove against our neighbour, or exalting of self, or words of levity, speaking irreverently of sin or of holy things, or of Holy Scripture, or exaggeration or untruthfulness,—not now to speak of any of the worser acts, of leading others to evil, or weakening the fear of God in another, or speaking slight-

ingly of the truths of God. I say nothing now of acts of deadly sin, as I am speaking now of those who are in the grace of God, not of those who have done what kills the soul until it be revived by penitence, and casts them for the time out of the grace of God. What a countless host it is! Yet the sins which men *commit*, they *can* count, if they do not blind themselves to them, or (which is most common) forget them, either through heedlessness or the wish not to remember them, or turning away from them. Even of very deadly sins, persons, after a time, cannot recall the number. If, after many years, they would sift their conscience through and through, in order to repent of their besetting sins before God, they have been obliged to *estimate* the probable number of their sins, which they could not *count*. If people would keep as diligent account of their conscience as they do of their expenditure, they would be startled at their frequency. Let one, who converses much, think how often he detracts from, or speaks ill of, or repeats evil which he thinks to be true of his neighbour: you might as well try to count the falling leaves of autumn. They drop one by one, dry, sere, light; what a mouldering mass of corruption they become, when putrifying together! Is the unlove, contempt, pride, self-exaltation, which gives birth to these random words, less offensive in the eyes of God?

But these can be counted, though few take account of them, fewer count them. What of sins of omission? Of these, again, some few strike us, if they be flagrant neglects of duty. If, through some act of sloth, morning or evening prayer is shortened,

or said just to bribe the conscience, but for the most part omitted or hurried, or if wilful distractions are allowed in Church, these are a wound on the conscience, at first, until the soul becomes habituated to them. When the soul is inured to them, it owns to itself that it is not so devout as it should be, or that it is slovenly in its preparations for Holy Communion, or about Holy Communion altogether; and so it dismisses the subject. 'It does not profess to be so devout as some.'

And yet, all these are acts of spiritual sloth; and sloth, when ripened, is a deadly sin. The "[b] slothful servant" is not recorded to have committed deadly sins. He was simply idle. Well were it with the mass of the higher, educated classes, who have nothing to do but to please themselves; well were it with the busy active men of this world; well were it with, I fear, many, nominally educated here, if it were no worse. And yet, since proverbial truth says, 'Idleness is the mother of all vices,' what a fearful brood there must be besides!

Yet by sins of omission, I mean not, where the whole life is one omission; I mean sins which beset the life of all, omission of things which ought to be done for God; things, which only culpable ignorance, the fruit of past negligence, hinders any from seeing that he ought to do for God; as, when any one ought to speak in behalf of God or the faith or morals, and yet is tongue-tied by human respect or false shame. The Psalmist says of his actual sins, "[c] They are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me," but these he

[b] S. Matt. xxv. 26. [c] Ps. xl. 12.

could count; his errors and negligences he says, "[d] who can understand?" and has to commit them blindly to God, "O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults."

Yet sins of omission and commission too are but the body of the sin. The sins may be the self-same, and yet, in God's sight, wholly different. For "[e] to whom much is given, of him they will ask the more." We may delude ourselves by thinking, 'I do or say only what that other does or says.' Yet what, from association, or early negligent training, or surroundings, or involuntary habituation to thoughts and words of ill, may in *their* case be extenuated in God's sight, may be wholly without excuse, when done against full light and grace.

Yet even ordinary omissions may be, in some degree, estimated. Who shall estimate unthankfulness? "[f] God," the Psalmist says, "daily loadeth us with benefits." We have often said,

> '[g] New every morning is the love
> Our wakening and uprising prove.
> New mercies each returning day
> Hover around us while we pray;
> New perils past, new sins forgiven;
> New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.'

And where are the thanks? It is well if we do not turn His gifts against the Giver, account them as our own, become vain, proud, self-sufficient, self-satisfied, contemptuous, conceited, because He has given them to us.

But, at best, where are the thanks? God became

[d] Ps. xix. 12. [e] S. Luke xii. 48. [f] Ps. lxviii. 19.
[g] Christian Year, Morning.

Man for love of us; God, having become Man, became, as it were, our Companion; God-Man, having ascended to prepare a place for us, giveth Himself to us for Food. A single Communion is Angels' food: it might be an Angel's joy for all Eternity. But where are the thanks? Nay, daily, hourly, momentarily, Jesus says, "[h] If a man love Me, He will keep My commandments, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode in him." God dwell in these houses of clay, in our sin-stained souls! Yet where are the thanks?

And yet we own, if the question is of our benefits to our fellow-men, and their dealing with us, ingratitude seems an aggravation of any wickedness. Let a person have committed murder or any other extremest sin, it enhances it, in our eyes, if we can but add, 'Yes, and he was so ungrateful.' How do men speak of it? 'The most damnable vice and moste against justice in myn opinion,' says one[i], 'is ingratitude.' 'In the charge of ingratitude,' says another[k], 'omnia dixeris:' it is one great blot upon all mortality: it is all in a word: it says, Amen to the black-roll of sins; it gives more completion and confirmation to them all.' And this ingrate is our hourly, momentary, sinful self.

And yet how costless is thankfulness! It may cost self-denial, to give much alms to the poor, to subdue the flesh, to overcome sloth, to moderate ambition, to resist anger, if provoked; but 'thanks

[h] S. John xiv. 23.

[i] Sir T. Elyot 'The Governour' ii. 13. quoted in Richardson Dict. sub. verb.

[k] South, Sermons Vol. i. Serm. 10. quoted Ib.

be to God' is so readily thought or said. Do we know that we are redeemed? that God became Man for love of us, that, as now, the Holy One clad Himself with Flesh like our sinful flesh, to suffer for us, since in Himself He could not suffer, that "[1]He loved us," one by one, "and gave Himself for us." Is this an every day thing, that it moves us so little, that, if we were judged by our own standard, if it should be meted to us with our own measure, we should have no hope? Were God to say to us, 'I will take no account of all besides; for no sins against Me and My law, fleshly or spiritual, will I condemn thee; though thou have been a slave to the world, which thou didst renounce; though thou have immersed thyself in the pleasures of sense; though thou wert a prey to all thy passions, and deniedst thyself nothing for love of Me Who gave thee thyself, and all the means of thine enjoyments and thy power to enjoy them, yet if thou wert grateful to Me, I will forgive thee all besides,' What could we say? Our thanklessness alone would condemn us.

I have, in all this, purposely avoided all allusion to deadly sin, both because I hope that many of you, my sons, are, by God's grace, as yet free from it, and because I wished you to think of this especially, your responsibility to God, for your daily hourly acts and thoughts. Deadly sin, until the conscience is cauterised, leaves a wound upon it. Those lesser sins people take as a matter of course. Yet the drifting sand will bury whole caravans; a slight leak unheeded would, in the end, sink a ship; accumulated lesser sins would extinguish the love of

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

God in us. The love of the world cannot co-exist with the love of God.

Until we love God and the law of God, and His blessed Will become (in our measure) the ruling passion of our souls, we hate responsibility. We should shrink from the naked profaneness of those who *said*, "[m] Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" but we *act* it. We should not, most of us, dare to *say*, 'God will not enquire,' but we *live* it.

And therefore God brings before us the exactness, the minuteness, the all-pervadingness of His future judgement. A judgement, which should not be *very* exact, were no judgement. That judgement is not only to assign to us our place on the right hand or the left, among those, blessed of the Father or the cursed, but our own particular place, in weal or woe. God, Who is a "[n] discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," will not judge in the mass, so to say. The Day of Judgement will be the explanation of this world of man's free-will and sin, and of God's grace and love. Each will go "[o] to his own place;" and the Day of Judgement will be a day of account, why God assigns that place to each.

Soul, by creation, differs from soul. It becomes more different by its use, neglect, or contempt of God's transforming reforming grace. And as each thought, word, act, each duty performed or neglected, each enlarged grace, or deepened sinfulness, forms our final self, each will come into judgement. Our Judge says, "[p] I will reward every one according to his works." "[q] I say unto you, that *every* idle

[m] Ps. xii. 4. [n] Heb. iv. 12. [o] Acts i. 25.
[p] S. Matt. xvi. 27. [q] Ib. xii. 36, 37.

word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgement; for by thy words shalt thou be justified and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." "[r] I am He that searcheth the reins and the *hearts*, *and* I will give unto every one of you according to your works." "[s] God shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts." "[t] God shall bring *every* work into judgement, with *every* secret thing, whether good or evil."

Here, on earth, years, as they pass, dull the memory of past sin; the world palliates it with false maxims; custom inures us to untrue excuses for it; those around us seldom venture to speak the truth, or are themselves blinded by partiality or by the like imperfection; we make to ourselves false consciences.

To what end, since the soul has one day to leave all which here dazzles or blinds? The companion, who here palliates or excuses or shares in the sin, cannot accompany thee thither or protect thee there; the voice of the multitude, which drowns the voice of the conscience here, cannot be heard there. Alone thou must stand at the judgement-seat of Christ: naked and bare, thy soul must stand in the full light of Him, Who is Very Light, and will cast His Light into thy inmost self: thou wilt not be able to forget *there* what here thou hast ever turned from, the memory of past ill: thou wilt not be able to bribe or cozen thy conscience *there*. Conscience will be awakened there. It will say to thee, 'Did I not check thee in this? Did I not murmur, when thou

[r] Rev. ii. 23. [s] 1 Cor. iv. 5. [t] Eccles. xii. 14.

didst silence me? Did I not whisper to thee thoughts of good or peace, or love to the poor, or not to injure purity? Didst thou ever read a dangerous book, and I did not say gently and firmly to thee, Lay it down? Didst thou ever make a jest of sin, but I rebuked thee?'

What remedy, then, is there? "[u]If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." But we must judge ourselves through and through (διεκρίνομεν); not with a partial or careless or bribed or perverse judgement. 'Good is that judgement,' says a holy man, 'which withdraws and hides me from the strict judgement of God. I fear to fall into the hands of the living God. I will judge my evil. I will judge also my good. For we must needs fear, lest in that accurate judgement, many, which we think our righteousnesses, will appear to be sins. I will take heed not to offer tares for wheat, nor chaff for grain. I will sift my ways, that He Who shall come to try the reins and the heart, may find nothing in me unsifted and unexamined.' God will not judge the same thing a second time.

We *must* come into judgement; we must see our whole selves; we should not otherwise know the greatness of the love of our God. Yet if we grieve for them here and leave them, we shall see them, not for our condemnation but as washed out by the Blood of Jesus. God will have forgiven our evil, for Jesus' sake. It will be blotted out and gone. But 'mercy triumpheth over justice.' 'We are,' at best, 'but unprofitable servants, doing by God's grace what is our duty to do.' But, our sins washed away against

[u] 1 Cor. xi. 31.

our deserts, there is not the meanest deed of faith, there is no petty act of self-denial, there is not an act or word of love or kindness, there is not a deed of mercy to the poor, which, as soon as it is spoken or done, does not live in that Infinite Memory and Knowledge of Almighty God, Who will keep what you commit to Him until that Day. Each deed well-done for love of Him is, by His mercy and grace, an earnest of the "[x] Well done, good and faithful servant." Be zealous, then, my sons: for ye would labour for no passing unsatisfying end. For God says, "[y] I am thine exceeding great Reward." Thy Reward shall be God Himself; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

[x] S. Matt. xxv. 21. [y] Gen. xv. 1.

SERMON XXIV[a].

EVERY THOUGHT, WORD, DEED, SHALL BE JUDGED.

Eccl. xii. 13, 14.

"*Fear God and keep His commandments. For this is the whole of man. For God shall bring every deed into judgement with every secret thing, whether good or whether bad.*"

What, 'all?' you will say. 'Each individual thing?' That very thing, of which, in my whole life, I am most ashamed; which did no open dishonour to God, which hurt (as men speak) no one but myself; which no one ever knew of; that which I had rather die, than have it proclaimed in this Church? And not that only, but every thing which I have ever done beside or against the holy Will of God; every wrong thought I have ever cherished; every foul imagination I have ever indulged; every envious feeling I have ever wilfully entertained; every wrong passage I have dwelt upon; must all come into judgement? Will no repentance cleanse the stain? Will not the Blood of Jesus wash out the spot, that I should never see it more? Repentance will, through the Blood of Jesus, cleanse the con-

[a] Preached at a College-Service, the Sunday before Advent, 1870.

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science. God will accept the will, that what defiled it, had not been: but not so, that thou shalt not again see it. "The books," Scripture saith, "shall be opened:" that book of conscience and of memory, wherein the past is written, as though graven on the rock. "[b] The Lord, when He cometh," S. Paul says, "shall cast light upon the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." O the searching brightness of that ray, the very light of God Who is Light, revealing to us sinners even what was dark to ourselves: dark, because we had shut out the light which would enlighten us; dark, because continued sin darkens and blinds the conscience and dulls and sears its feeling.

It were no real judgement, which did not revive all, did not bring all into judgement. You cannot imagine a partial judgement of God. You could not think, (if you thought at all) that all this horrible reign of sin were permitted, without some great end, in the world of our All-good All-wise God. We should not (if by God's mercy we are saved) know the depth of the forbearing love of God, and the tender forgivingness of Jesus, or our own endless debt to His Precious Blood, and the Infinite love of His wounded Heart, if we did not see the boundless ingratitude against His love, and, amid that frightful mass, our own; if we too did not, with penitent grieved eyes, behold that black foul heap of our ingratitudes, and Him, Whom through them we, more than the rude ignorant soldier, had pierced. This must be our aweful comfort, as the

[b] 1 Cor. iv. 5.

result to us of that dreadful Day. But this, at the best. In that Day, God's dread Holiness will have to be cleared. Justice is as essential to God as His Mercy. "[c]The Lord our God is Holy." He can be "[d]no accepter of persons; but He that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted by Him." The Day of mercy will then be past. A merciful Judge we shall still have. Since we must be judged, we had rather have Him for our Judge, Who took our nature upon Him to die for us and to save us, than any created being. There is love for us, even in judgement. He, our Judge, will have plied us with His graces and His visitations to the very last. He Who bought us with His Precious Blood would not part with the price of His Blood, the work of His Hands, if He could keep or regain us. But there *is* that terrible, "[e]ye would not." "How often would I have gathered you," with all that tender, fostering, protecting love, "and ye would not." Oh that agonising tender reproachfulness, which the unrepentant sinner's conscience must own; "ye would not." All else will be over then. The tree will have fallen. There is no more trial then.

But apart from that horrible possibility of being lost for ever, apart from the peril of being for ever severed from the sight of God and the love of God, for which He created us, and from the love of all who love; apart from the miserable ruin of our nature, the loss of all capacity, ourselves to love, which yet in some extreme cases we actually see before our eyes in very hardened guilt or selfishness, even

[c] Ps. xcix. 9. [d] Acts x. 34, 35.
[e] S. Luke xiii. 34.

in this life;—apart even from this terrible issue, it must be agony beyond all conceivable agonies, except the final despair of being shut out for ever from God, to hang in doubt as to the issue of the judgement. What centuries of agony concentrated in that period, be it longer or shorter! The soul must die through it; only that God has gifted it with immortality like His own. It cannot die.

And yet, if we look away from ourselves and our self-love, how unutterably beyond our conception that judgement is! Where should the line be drawn? We know in the abstract: it will be between those who have finally turned to God, and those who have finally turned away from Him. But who shall these be among those who throng our streets? Who among those who fall on any of these battle fields? Who among those, who, amid their manifold temptations to wrong, drag out with difficulty their existence? Who among those, whose outward lot and visible life have been like that of Dives? Who, we may ask ourselves, among ourselves?

"[f] Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they shall ask the more." There is then no one standard. That seeming outward show, nay, as far as we know, those same outward acts which, in one who has few aids and many hindrances, would imply obedience to the grace of God, might in us who have every aid, imply disobedience. What when Heathen, Jews, Christians; savage, civilised; ignorant, instructed; those gifted with but a flickering light of conscience, dimmed

[f] S. Luke xii. 48.

by hereditary evil customs, and we who live in the full effulgence of the Sun of Righteousness and the glorious light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, are to stand at the same judgement-seat, to receive each according to the deeds done in the body?

What then as to ourselves? We are wont to fix our thoughts on, it may be, some natural virtue; some activity, the result, it may be, of natural impulse, with which obedience to God and His grace have very little to do; some transient emotion: some costless benevolence; some toil, for which, secretly, we gained or sought or cherished the world's praise; some round of pleasant or ambitious duties, wherein, by idolising self, we robbed God; and then, over what foul corruption, what unrepented sins of times past, do we cast this pall, and think not, what that Day will reveal, which shall withdraw it and lay bare the foul mass, which lay beneath, and every secret motion and pulse of the heart!

And yet these make up our whole selves; and it is our whole self, all which through growth in sin or in holiness we have become, which is to be judged by the undeviating justice of God. Until God's Good Spirit arouse us to an earnest moral fight, we are apt to look on the acts of each day as something insulated, past and gone. Heathen philosophy told us that they formed habits, i. e. one whole. God's Word tells us, that, such as that *whole* has become; such as we are become through all those several acts, through all those several obediences or disobediences, or contempts of the graces, drawings, checks; according to all that acting of God upon our souls through His law without or His

Holy Spirit within us, by *that* we shall be judged. But who knows his whole self? Who can estimate his sins of omission? Mostly we know absolutely nothing of them. We slighted God's grace, and thought nothing of it. Or who can imagine how many acts done in the main for God, he spoiled through some creeping-in of vain-glory, or self-conceit, or love of the praise of man? One who has at any time been a slave to any deadly sin, cannot form any even approximate estimate of the number of his most deadly sins, such as the heathen condemned, while they did them.

Life then, my sons, and every day of life, are far more serious things than most of you have been wont to think of. God, as He is God, cannot be otherwise than just. He cannot say, "[g] Well done, good and faithful servant" to one who, to the end, had persevered in being bad and faithless.

As then you would not fall into the hands of His Justice, flee now to His Mercy. As you would not find the door shut, enter in, now that it is open. As you would not have your Judge's Face turned from you, and hear that terrible, "[h] I know you not," seek to Him now "[i] Who ever liveth to make intercession for us;" turn from God displeased to God appeased. One earnest longing, for the love of God, that you had not displeased God; and you are in the way of salvation. Say with David, "[k] I have sinned against the Lord," and God will say to thee, as by Nathan, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." And for the time

[g] S. Matt. xxv. 21.
[h] Ib. 12.
[i] Heb. vii. 25.
[k] 2 Sam. xii. 13.

to come, live, by God's grace, as one whom God longs to save; whom He created in His Infinite Love for that Infinite Love; but whom, if thou persevere to reject that Love, His holy Justice cannot acquit. It is to that most full declaration of God's mercy and compassion that He Himself adds, "[l] and will by no means clear the guilty." Live, day by day, as one who has to give account: so in that Day you will give your account with joy, and hear that pledge of endless boundless bliss, "[m] Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

[l] Exod. xxxiv. 7. [m] S. Matt. xxv. 21.

SERMON XXV.

WHITHER ART THOU GOING?

HAGGAI i. 7.

"*Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.*"

ANOTHER milestone of our journey on this earth has been passed since last Advent. The milestone was marked with different numbers for most of us. To some it says, that they *must* be near their journey's end: to others, setting out in life, only that they *may* be. But the road is like the country on which the fire of God fell, which "[a] was full of slime-pits," into which if any fall, he sinks out of sight. They are thicker and closer in life's dawn. Some are always disappearing: on what rule of God's wisdom and love we know not. But thus much is common to us all. One more division of the brief span of man's life is gone, and gone for ever. Whatever were the scenes we passed through, of sorrow or of joy, of fresh interest or amusement with the young, of faithfulness or, alas! of disobedience to God's voice, of good or evil deeds or thoughts or words, they are gone from us, past recall. They live but in their

[*] Preached at a College-Service, Advent Sunday, 1875.

effects, good or evil, on our own minds or on those among whom God has cast our lot. Joys, pleasures, interests, nay the love which was a brightness or at least a sunny spot in life, have ceased or faded out of sight. We shall see them no more on earth. But in their effects they have an undying life. They live in God's All-containing Mind, to re-appear perhaps in our own, in misgiving or upbraiding or remorse, or if aught have, by God's mercy and grace, been done aright, in hopeful trust in His great Goodness. But any how, "[b]every work, with every secret thing," shall re-appear at the judgement-seat of Christ, "whether good or whether evil."

This too we all have in common; we are all so much further on in our journey. To the young it may seem, perhaps it is, relatively a short portion. But young or old, it is a sensible portion of life's journey. And a journey ends somewhere; each step of it is somewhither.

Whither then are we each going? I do not ask, whither shall we go? This God alone knows. We cannot tell this even as to this life. Even in this life we see sudden reverses, or sudden accesses of prosperity. The wheel goes round, and, alive through the unseen governance of God, crushes those who at one time seem to be on high upon it, and exalts those who are low. God Himself says, "[c] When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die." God Himself continually repeats to us, "[d] When the wicked turneth away from his wickedness that he hath com-

[b] Eccl. xii. 14. [c] Ezek. xviii. 26. [d] Ib. 27.

mitted, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." Perseverance to the end is among the secrets of God's Providence, given to those who ask Him. It is not the mere consequence of the previous life, such as we see it; it is not the mere result of previous well-doing. It is the crowning gift of God to those whom He knows purely and simply to love Him. We have doubtless many of us in years gone-by repeated mournfully the close of that hymn of him, to whose humility God gave the death of a saint;

> [e] The grey-haired saint may fail at last,
> The surest guide a wanderer prove:
> Death only binds us fast
> To the bright shore of love.

The dying robber at our Blessed Lord's side, on the other hand, has been the forerunner of many, whom, contrary to all their antecedents (of which some are so fond of speaking,) God, Who is rich in mercy, rescued at the last from the jaws of the lion when now ready to devour them, and the pit shut not its mouth upon them, who just before were casting themselves into it.

The question which Advent yearly repeats to us is not, 'Whither shall you go?' but 'Whither *are* you going now? Whither does the path, on which you now are, lead? Whither have your ways, since the last Advent, been leading? You are, at least, so much nearer your journey's end. For what end have you in this last year been preparing yourself? To which have you been drawing nearer?' Terrible as the language is, because the question is so terri-

[e] Christian Year. 8th Sunday after Trinity.

ble, the issue, if evil, so horrible and irreversible, the only true faithful question is, in its aweful explicitness, 'Are you nearer to Heaven or to Hell?' To one you must be nearer. There is no third place, whither, if unfit for Heaven, to escape from Hell. For the Presence and the sight of God is Heaven: the final loss of God were alone Hell.

But you are nearer, not in time only, not only because the sum of the years in store for you, is decreased by this one; but you are nearer in mind also. You may not yourselves have observed it; those who love you or are anxious about you, may not have gone beyond misgiving, if the change alas! have been for the worse, but, in the sight of God and His Angels it must be visible. For it must be there. Some (God grant that it may be many!) have, by the grace of God, not "[f] defiled their garments," or, by repentance may have "[g] washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb." But some change there must have been, and that, the more marked, because your minds have not yet stiffened; 'like wax,' the heathen poet said, 'to be bent to evil;' like wax, (may God grant!) to receive deeper into yourselves the impress of the Image of God, through the working of His Spirit.

But 'not to advance,' says the proverb so manifoldly verified, 'is to fall back.' 'Whoever in the school of Christ,' says a holy man[h], 'advanceth not, is unworthy to have Him as a Master.—Let no one say, It is enough, I will so to remain: it is enough for me to be as yesterday and the day before. Such an one sitteth down on the way: he standeth still

[f] Rev. iii. 4. [g] Ib. vii. 14. [h] S. Bernard Ep. 385. n. 1.

on the ladder, where the Patriarch saw no one who was not either ascending or descending. I say then, "[i] let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."' '[k] Thou sayest, 'I wish to abide where I have arrived; I could not endure to become worse. I desire not to be better. Thou willest then what cannot be. For what standeth still in this life? Certainly of man especially it is said, "[l] He fleeth like a shadow and continueth not."' '[m] In the uncertainty of this mortal life nothing abideth in the same state. He is not even good, who willeth not to be better. Where thou ceasest to wish to be better, there thou ceasest to be good.'

Of some changes you must be aware; in some you have doubtless rejoiced. Your bodily strength has developed; your store of knowledge increased; your mind has been disciplined; perhaps your active intellect has been awakened, and you have reached the time

> when reason's aweful power
> Gives thought a bolder range[n];

you feel yourselves more fitted for those duties in this world, in which your life is to be passed, in the performance of which, to God or for the world or for yourselves, much of your probation will lie, and to which, I hope, not natural inclination, but God's call will determine you. But what as to your souls? In what way have they changed? Are they fitter for *their* End, for that, for which God created them, for which alone you are in this world, for which cause you were born, to live to God

[i] 1 Cor. x. 12. [k] S. Bern. Ep. 254. n. 4.
[l] Job xiv. 2. [m] S. Bern. Ep. xci. n. 3. [n] Lyra Apost. n. xiii.

and His glory, to live with Him and love Him and be the object of His individual Love for ever?

I fear that if many could answer me truly, your answer would be much of this sort, 'We have not thought particularly about it; we know that we have our faults, as all have; we hope, that we have some good points; we know that we are not altogether what we should be, what we hope one day we may be; but we are young, there is time yet.' Who has told you that there will be time, or that you will use God's grace more than now? But this one thing is certain, If you have not used God's grace in the last year, you are, humanly speaking, less in the way to use it this next. And so it would be in the way of nature. Each year would, unless God should, in some way perhaps of austere mercy, rouse you, leave you more stiffened in your careless ways than the year before, until you should sleep the sleep of death.

But think this, my sons, would you prepare for anything, which you care about in this life, as you prepare for eternity. You would not so prepare for any race in this life. You know that you would lose, and you have now at least been diligent in the trial, as to human knowledge, which has come upon some of you. You know some of you that, in human affairs, 'book-keeping' is a study for itself, and what accuracy is used to make it exact, how much depends upon its accuracy. Is the only book, to be kept slovenly, disorderly, or rather not kept at all, that book, which shall be opened on the Great Day when the dead shall be judged out of those things written in the books—the book of conscience? *Then*,

however we may have hidden all which we could from our own view, whatever we may not have noticed, or tried to forget, or have forgotten, or have excused ourselves, as if it were in the way of nature and we could not help it, every the faintest character, will stand out in the bright beams of Divine light, and we shall be constrained to own whatever is against us, as true. But it would be too late to cry for mercy then, if we have not, with tears of repentance, sought it at our Redeemer's Feet before.

And therefore God has divided our lives into these lesser portions. But each resting-place should give us pause, and force us into ourselves, and make us think, for a time at least, whether we have made ever so little progress on the way, or have sat down by the way, or, having left the doomed cities, have, like Lot's wife, turned back towards them, for love of their luxuries, or their pleasures, or their sins, or have even turned altogether aside out of the way, into "the broad road which leadeth to destruction."

And therefore God gives us so many Advents, heralds of the coming of Jesus in His glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and dead, and in and by each of them He renews the voice of the Prophet, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways." Consider what you have been doing, what you are doing, and whither those doings are tending. For all our ways are leading to some end of the way, good or bad. So God says by Jeremiah, "[o] I set before you the way of life and the way of death;"

[o] Jer. xxi. 8.

and by Solomon, "[p] There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, and the end thereof are the ways of death;" and you know of whose house it is said, that it is the way to hell; "[q] her feet go down unto death; her steps lay hold of hell, lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life."

And these our ways, He bids us consider. In His own word, "set your heart upon them." He does not merely bid you, set your mind, apply your understanding, give your thoughts (though even this may be a great gain), but "set your heart," the seat of your affections. And this not lightly, not with a passing feeling, not with a faint powerless longing; 'I would gladly be other than I am, only not yet; I must have the pleasure of sin for a time, and turn to God hereafter;' but set it, fix it, fix thy heart upon thy ways, even as God Himself is said to fix His Eye or His Face upon man for good or for evil, even as that Eye, now, at every moment, rests unchangeably on thee.

And why 'fix our heart?' *Who* made you? and for what did He make you? Who, those (it may be) 20 or 21, or 22 years ago, with individual care created your soul, and infused it into the body which you received from your parents, tempering it exactly to the companion with which He associated it, that both should have that perfection which He saw best for you? Who, in that Eternal Mind, in which, unchanging Himself, He beholds all things which are or can be, saw the whole course of the life, which He purposed for you, and ordained all the countless graces, which should attend you and guide you in

[p] Prov. xiv. 12. [q] Ib. vi. 5, 6.

all your ways, if you would keep in them, or would bring you back, if when you went away from them, you *would* be brought back. And every grace was purchased by the Blood of Jesus, "[r] Who loved you and gave Himself for you."

And whither then were those ways to lead, which He prepared for you to walk in? Where were they to end? He Himself has told you the end, Himself and His Infinite Love. "I," He revealed Himself to Abraham the father of the faithful; "[s] I am thy Shield," thy protection by the way, and *I*, no created thing, no imaginable bliss, which should be finite because it is created, "*I* am thine exceeding great Reward."

Is Infinity too narrow for you? Will not Divine Beauty content you? Will not unbounded Love, of which all created love, the poor semblance of which so fascinates you, is but the tiniest spark, and yet is so winning because it is an effluence from that exhaustless fire of Divine Love? Such is the unending End, for which God created you, Himself, Who, all in one, is Infinite Love, Infinite Beauty, Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Goodness, overstreaming all the faculties of thy soul for ever, with no stint except thy capacity to contain it. Does not such loving care about thy being and thy future demand of thee a loving reverent care, how thou mayest attain to Him Who offers His Love to thee so freely, Who has given the Son of His Love to purchase for thee the power of loving Him; Who, before thou couldest know good or evil, gave thee His Holy Spirit, that thou mightest love Him, because He

[r] Gal. ii. 20. [s] Gen. xv. 1.

first loved thee, and mightest continue in His Love, as He, "loving His own, loveth them to the end[t]?" Does it not often set the heart on fire with love, if a poor human being, such as we are, says truly, 'I love thee.' And now it is Almighty God with His Infinite Love, Who says, 'I love thee,' "[u]My son give me thine heart."

But how, if you have not yet done it, are you to set about this considering your ways? How would you do, if you suspected that you were out of your way on this earth? You would, if you could see it, look back to your starting-point, and see how, little by little, you had swerved from the right path. You would in that salt sea, which is such a picture of this ever-busying, dazzling, restless world, look up to the sun at mid-day, and correct your direction by reference to it. On us, there ever shines that "Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings;" for us has risen "that true Light, which lighteth every man, that cometh into the world." He calleth you by His Apostle, "[v]Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Look back to earlier days, see by what lesser or greater steps thou first departedst from the narrow way; look how evil habits (whatever thou hast or hast had) strengthened by repetition; "[x]sift thyself through and through," says the prophet, "and so sift on." Then shalt thou make progress, not if thou findest not what to blame, but if thou blame what thou findest. When thou didst not set thy

[t] S. John xiii. 1. [u] Prov. xxiii. 26.
[v] Eph. v. 14. [x] Zeph. ii. 1. See Dr. Pusey's Comm. p. 455.

heart upon thy ways, thou didst incur daily, well-nigh countless sin, in thought word desire and deed, yea and in omission of duty. Once thou must see them in the Day of Judgement; dare to behold them now, that thou behold them not to thy condemnation then. Judge thyself, that thou be not judged of the Lord. And if the work is too hard for thee alone, seek one to help thee, or, at least, say to God with the Psalmist, "[y] Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." He Himself, if thou trust Him, will "[z] guide thee by His counsel:" He Himself, in the end, will, for Jesus' sake, "receive thee into glory." Here, even in the freshness and buoyancy of youth, life is but a varied restlessness. Christ from heaven, where He intercedeth for thee, crieth still to thee, "Come unto Me, and I will give thee rest;" rest in thyself, rest and peace with God, rest everlasting in and with Himself. Christ, Who died for thee will Himself lead thee to Himself. Only trust Him.

[y] Ps. cxxxix. 24. [z] Ib. lxxiii. 24.

SERMON XXVI.[a]

MURDER OF SOULS.

S. Matt. xix. 18.

"*Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder.*"

"Do no murder?" you may say to me. We know that we have our faults, the faults of our age; we hope to love and serve God better hereafter; we are not altogether what we ought to be. But "murder!" what can we have to do with "murder?" And yet our Lord, in that embodiment of His moral teaching, the Sermon on the mount, gives a very prominent place to His expansion of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill:" and very aweful and searching His words are.

But I was thinking of something, not akin only, or tending to, or containing the germs, or habits of mind, or feelings akin to murder (such as wishing a person dead, who was troublesome to us), but murder, itself.

Are we bodies only? No one here, I trust, will doubt that we have souls. And the soul is much more precious than the body? Of course. And bodily murder is not the less murder, if a person consent to or even invites his own death? Human law, you will answer, does not hold it excused.

[a] Preached in a College-Service, first Sunday in Lent, 1869.

And even if the murder be mutual, it is not less, murder? God's law prohibits all shedding of blood, save where His law commands it.

To destroy the life of grace in the soul is a greater evil than the destruction of the life of the body. The death of the body is often gain; the death of the soul is misery irremediable, endless. But who then is guilty of injuring the life of the soul? In every sin there are countless shades. I should not speak to you, my sons, of wilfully seeking any thing which you might be tempted to desire, with the known loss of another's soul. Youth is too noble, too generous for such deliberate heartless selfishness. And yet our loving Lord pronounced that heavy repeated woe, "[a] Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come, but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh"—Offences, you know, not whereby a man is offended, but whereby he is occasioned to offend. His words must have some very large emphatic meaning, because our Lord says it so very solemnly. It must be a wide-spread evil; for our Lord says, "Wo to the world because of it." It is not one definite sin, which can be committed in one way, or even in several ways only, and so can be guarded against, by stopping up, so to speak, so many ways of it. It is not like lying, or swearing, or stealing, or drunkenness, which may be stopped wholly by truthfulness, sobriety, honesty, reverence. It is a sin cumulative of every sin, of which others know and which encourages them to sin. Through man's abuse of his free-will such offences have ever been, ever will be in this world of trial. But they are a heavy woe to the world,

[a] S. Matt. xviii. 7.

upon whom they come; they are a heavier woe to the man, through whom they come.

Sin has a double evil, an evil to the sinner himself, an evil to another or to others, whom it occasions to sin. Upon repentance, the Blood of Jesus Christ washes away the sinner's own sin, but what of the other? People sin together; alas! they seldom repent together. They go their way, separate, perhaps forgetting one another, until they meet at the Judgement-seat of Christ.

And yet, since sin is scarcely ever absolutely unknown to all save God, then it scarcely ever happens that a sin has not this two-fold evil, the evil to the sinner's own soul, and the evil which tends to corrupt others. It needs not, that a person should directly compass the damnation of others. This were too horrible: it were Satan's own malice. But would you hold a man guiltless, who carried fire among substances lightly kindled, and said that he meant not to fire them? Alas! the human soul carries about it fuel for any fire. "[b] It is set on fire of hell," S. James says of the tongue which uses wrong unallowed words.

This is a side of sin, which the young think but little of. You think more or less of your own faults, I hope, at least so as to ask God's forgiveness of them. But this terrible undying aspect of them you think not of, because, however you may see the seed sown, you do not see the ripened harvest of death. Yet sin has a terrible, infective prolificalness, a hideous progeny. Sin breeds sin. Sin which does not create loathing or terrror or sorrow for it, disposes to the like, familiarises to it, prepares for

[b] S. James iii. 6.

it, whenever the temptation is strong enough, even if not imitated at once. Think of those tens of thousands in our cities, who die an untimely death, publicæ libidinis victimæ, and that of Christians. By thoughtless familiarities, such as the young often think to be no harm, reserve was broken, the bloom of modesty was brushed away. Once, one by one, they were perhaps like your own sisters. Their brothers doubtless thought so. And now? Who shall say that every careless word, careless act, did not contribute to their present death? As well say that each blow of the axe did not aid to lay the oak prostrate. Is one less a poisoner, because he gives those accumulating doses, which in the end destroy life, or because the last comes from another hand? How can they think that Christian purity exists, that there is any thing to repent of, when they know only of those who seek them as accomplices of their sin. And yet unless rescued by some miracle of God's grace, they will each in the Day of Judgement accuse, with that agonising shriek of despair, every one who bribed them to fill up the measure of their perdition; 'We were destroyed by you and you and you; disciples of the Crucified.' "[c] Woe to that man, by whom the offence cometh."

Yet it needs not only such completed evil to incur our Lord's woe. It needs no forethought to contract the guilt: it needs only thoughtlessness. What is so much of the mixed society of the young but a mutual infection? It is in thoughtlessness that the wrong word, the profane use of Holy Scripture, the saying of double meaning, the impure allusion, the unbefitting jest, the irreligious railing, the jest

[c] S. Matt. xviii. 7.

against over-strictness is uttered. And yet through these, purity of mind is injured or the stain already contracted is deepened, and recovery is made more difficult, and thoughts of further sin suggested, and words of evil elicited in return. '[d] I ran headlong with such blindness,' S. Augustine says of his heathen youth, 'that amongst my equals I was ashamed of a less shamelessness, when I heard them boast of their flagitiousness, yea, and the more boasting, the more they were degraded: and I took pleasure, not only in the pleasure of the deed, but in the praise. I made myself worse than I was, that I might not be dispraised: and when in anything I had not sinned as the abandoned ones, I would say that I had done what I had not done, that I might not seem contemptible in proportion as I was innocent; or of less account, the more chaste.'

It is not enough, not to will to harm another's soul; not enough, to will, not to harm it, yet to do or say what will harm it. They are contradictory wills. But that is the real will which prevails. To will, not to injure another, but to do or say what will or may injure him, what is it but to blind a man's conscience and to sin against light?

We dare not say to God Cain's impious words, "[e] Am I my brother's keeper?" We all act upon others for good or ill. We all promote God's cause or Satan's. We are all and each to every other, fellow-workers with God, or instruments of Satan. The closer we are brought together, the more our sins, if we do sin, hurt another's soul. You are here together for a little while. Harm or good you must do one to another, to last perhaps for eternity.

[d] Conf. ii. n. 7. p. 22. Oxf. Tr. [e] Gen. iv. 9.

You may think to repent of your own sins. You cannot repent for another. You may aid another to sin; you cannot work in him repentance. It is an aweful, often haunting thought of those whom we knew in youth, 'Where are they?'

As you would not have that thought haunt you through life and fruitlessly; as you would be free from that terrible fear, Will God indeed save me, while that or that or that other perishes? Shall I indeed be taken and the other left? As you would not be enemies of Christ, destroying those for whom Christ died; as you would not, at the Day of Judgement, even if saved yourself, see one stretch forth his or her hand, towards you, as if you could save them; as though it were unjust, that they should perish, thou, the partner or originator of the sin, be saved; as you would not increase the number of the damned and minish the glory of thy Redeemer, then pray God, and watch with exceeding care, that neither by ill-example nor thoughtless words thou betray another into sin, or help to detain them in it. And for the past, pray often that prayer which the good Bishop still, after the threescore years and ten, moistened with his tears, "[e] On those *σκανδαλισθέντων ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ποτε* have mercy, Lord;" so for your love and zeal's sake, those with whom you were once associated in sin, may be associated with you in the everlasting love of Him Who hath loved us and washed us with His Blood To Whom be glory and honour for ever and ever.

[e] Bp. Andrewes, Preces quotid. p. 86. Oxon.

SERMON XXVII.[a]

COMPROMISES.

1 Kings xviii. 21.

"*And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: and if Baal, follow him.*"

Strange is it, if we think *Who* God is, *what* Baal was, that such a choice should have ever had to be put to man; stranger yet, that it should have had to be put to a people to Whom God had declared His love for them, His individual care of them and of each soul among them. Stranger still, that he who put it amid all that Carmel-din, was *one;* they to whom it was put, the representatives of almost a whole nation, all but the 7000. Strangest perhaps of all, not that any should openly apostatise, not that brutalized minds should give themselves up to a brutalizing worship, but that any, nay that most of that vast multitude should think, that they could unite in themselves two such opposite worships: the worship of God, Who forbade the murder of man formed in His own Image, and the worship of a god,

[a] Preached at a College Service.

to whom children were burned alive: the worship of a God of purity, and (which all their nature-worships were) of a god of lust. And yet, since "[b] *his* servants ye are, whom ye obey," the belly, the world, lust, anger, cruelty, are not the less worshipped, because the personal names, under which men deified their passions, are no longer in use. Human nature remains the same; God's claim on the sole allegiance of the creatures whom He made, remains the same; the temptingness of things out of God or contrary to God remains still the same: God's word then speaks to our souls in histories, unlike in form; in their essence, they are our very selves.

The world is still full of compromises. One might say, the world of this day is one great compromise. It hates nothing so much as Elijah's choice. It will allow us our 'opinions,' if we will not urge the Faith, as it was from the first, as *the* exclusive truth. It will allow us our practices, if we do not trench upon its neglects[c]. It will be content to regard our choices, as the results of our antecedents, of our natural constitution of mind, if we will say nothing of the grace of God, and will allow that all other choices are just as well suited to others, just as good in themselves; that evil choices are not the result of their free neglect of the grace of God, and their own disordering of the nature which He gave them. It will even praise liberal almsgiving, so that such giving be allowed to be an exception, not a necessity of salvation, incumbent upon every one

[b] Rom. vi. 16.

[c] Fanaticism has unlearned even this degree of tolerance 1882.

according to his ability, as he would find mercy in the Day which decides eternity.

What the poor world hates is, naturally, what condemns itself. The world is lax, it must hate strictness: the world is lawless, it must hate absolute unyielding law, which presses it: the world would be sovereign, keeping religion in its own place, to minister to its well-being, to correct excesses, to soothe it, when wanted. It would own its usefulness, so it be not exacting. But a kingdom, which though not of this world, demands the absolute submission of the world; which would "[d]take down vain reasonings, and every lofty thing which raiseth itself against the knowledge of God, and would take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ;" which offers perfect freedom, but only through perfect subjection to the mind of God ("[e] slaves," S. Paul calls himself and us, to God "and our Lord Jesus Christ and the law of God[f]"); which gives perfect wisdom, but only according to the mind of the All-wise, must of course, provoke the opposition of the world, until it too have learned to revolve around its Sun, the Sun of Righteousness.

But the world is weak, and, amid all its grand words, knows its weakness. Satan knows it too. For three centuries, he tried brute force; and his instruments were maddened, that by no extremity

[d] 2 Cor. x. 5.

[e] δουλεύω Acts xx. 19. Rom. vii. 6; xiv. 18. xvi. 18. Col. iii. 24. 1 Thess. i. 9. δοῦλοι, the Apostles, Acts iv. 29. S. Paul, Rom. i. 1. 1 Cor. vii. 22. 2 Cor. x. 7. Gal. i. 10. Eph. vi. 6. Phil. i. 2. Col. iv. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 24. Tit. i. 1. S. James i. 1 1 S. Pet. ii. 16. 2 S. Pet. i. 1. S. Jude 1. Rev. 12 times.

[f] Rom. vii. 25.

of torture could they bend the God-sustained will of Christians[g]. Yet here too was compromise on the world's part. Persecution would have ceased, Christians might have worshipped Christ, as they pleased, if only, by casting a little incense on Jupiter's altar, they would have owned that Christ was not, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, alone the God; that is, not *God* at all. Then, force failing, Satan tried a more refined compromise. All the whole history of heresy is one long history of varied compromise. 'We would be Christians,' they said in effect, 'we *are* Christians; only we cannot believe that the Son is One God with the Father; or that God took our nature into Himself, or that human nature is fallen, and needs the grace of God; or that Christ gives Himself to us under those poor visible forms of earth.'

Now he takes a bolder line, even to the denial of the Being of God, making our poor selves our god[h], but he still begins by compromise. He repeats what was so miserably successful in Paradise. "[i]Hath God indeed said?" He would take us each on our weak side. Has God indeed forbidden a noble ambition, or a proper pride, or a moderate love of the world, or this or that, (I must not say what, your own minds will supply it,) which has made our nature to crave? Or would He limit the range of thought with which He has endowed us? Or would He do violence to the conscience which He has made, the representative of Himself within

[g] This is visible throughout the conversations of the Prefects and the martyrs, in Ruinart, Acta Martyrum.

[h] Comte.

[i] Gen. iii. 1.

us, so that it should not be an absolute, individual judge of His own Words? Would He have us receive as truth, what is repugnant to our conceptions of His love, such as our very nature teaches us to conceive it?

He knows well, by the experience of these centuries of conflict for human souls, how great is the power of the love of God over the souls which He has made for Himself: how unwillingly He parteth with them; how the soul instinctively dreads to part altogether with its God. He sees too, how essential to the love and faith in God are humility and purity, though he cannot understand, in themselves, the temptations of the flesh, which he has not, or humility, which he never had. But he is wise enough to begin his attacks on either from afar off; on purity, by something not felt to be sin; on humility, by thoughts of not being behind the age; that things questioned by the talented, must needs be questionable; that it is a mark of intellect not to believe, what some of keen intellect have alas! parted with; or it is a grand thing, you perhaps imagine, to think for yourselves, and not be the slaves of any traditional creeds, of any preconceived dogmas, of any binding laws, out of yourselves. You hear, on the one hand, of the 'reign of law' in all the physical creation. But, of a 'reign of law' over yourselves, a 'reign of law' over your whole being, to infringe which is to violate nature itself; of a relation of yourselves, your whole being and every faculty of your being, to your God, in some created likeness of Whom every faculty of yours was formed, to be perfected in that Image

and Likeness,—of this, modern philosophy teaches nothing.

In every other subject of human knowledge, all progress is made by building up upon its principles. In Divine knowledge alone, progress is to be through their subversion. The principle of this new knowledge, is, to have no principle, except that the human mind, bribed as it is by its passions; blind, unless God be its Enlightener; narrow, unless God enlarge it; a magnificent ruin, unless God by His Grace repair it, is to be the standard, the rule, the arbiter of what is proposed to its belief;—to speak plainly, what it comes to, that man is the Creator of his God.

But this, by degrees, only. The first step, (which since faith is one, involves the whole) is the rejection of the first doctrine or practice, enjoined by God's Word, because it commends not itself to our individual judgement. The great predisposing cause is, that, because boundless progress is made in discoveries in God's works, therefore we are in some different attitude to their Maker; as though an almost boundless discovery of things finite could bridge over our distance from the Infinite; as though we were less creatures because we know a very little more of the magnificence of our Creator, to Whom all our creations, and all future creations, and all possible creations, though they shall never be, are still but as the finite to the Infinite, i. e. as nothing; dependent for being called into being, or continued in it, on His absolute Will.

Lift up your hearts for a while from this busy activity of finite thought, guessing but darkly at

any thing spiritual or as to your own souls, which is not revealed by God. Think of your eternal home, if by God's mercy you attain. Who is that God with Whom you shall live for ever? Is He a God, Who can have pleasure in impurity? or with Whom ambition can have place? Shall ye have pride then in that place in the many mansions, which God has created for you, or self-elation for the gifts which God shall bestow upon you, or for those fuller revelations, not of science, but of God Himself, which He shall unfold? Or will ye insist there that God shall disclose all to yourselves directly, and nothing through Cherubim or Seraphim or any other creature, and that you are entitled to reject what shall place, as is now said, the creature between you and your Creator? Or will you claim that nothing shall be unfolded to you, which fills and surpasses the capacities of your minds, and which you have not first subjected to the approval of your own individual judgement? Will you proffer to God to own Him, if He will condescend to exist as other than He is, and to be, alone in His creation, without any Co-Equal Object of His Infinite Love? Or will you, amid the bliss of that eternal thanksgiving to your Redeemer, when you see those glorious Wounds illumining heaven with the light of the Godhead, insist on not believing the humiliation of the Incarnation; or seeing *that*, shall you say that it is impossible that He could hide Himself under those poor earthly symbols, to give Himself to you? Or will you make it a condition of your thanksgiving for the bliss of heaven that there shall be no hell, from which, through His Passion,

you were redeemed, to which you sometimes, step by step, sometimes with headlong course, were going, and from which He, with His nail-pierced Hands withheld you, and by some over-powering grace turned you back to Himself?

In sight of those realities, the earth-born mists, which men are so busy in raising, are absorbed in the glow of the Sun of Righteousness. Be *His*, Whose you wish to be for ever. Choose *Him*, by Whom you have been chosen. You have not, like the heathen, to choose Him for the first time, as though He had for the first time revealed Himself to you. He has saved you from the risk of that perilous choice. You have only not to reject the choice which He in all eternity made of you, to be members of His Body, to bear His Name, to be His, not in word or in name only, but in deed and truth. Day by day, you are unconsciously making the choice; day by day, you are enslaving yourselves to his service from whom you have been delivered, or emerging more and more to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. But every day, in which some line of God's Image is not traced on your souls, is a loss for eternity. Choose Him anew now; choose Him Who Alone Is, to be your's; choose to be henceforth wholly His. Other lords, it may be, have, partially at least, had dominion over you. Let not the seal of Heaven mark the deserter. Say this day with His converted people, "[h] The Lord He is the God; the Lord He is the God." O Lord, be Thou Alone our God, and our Portion for ever.

[h] 1 Kings xviii. 39.

SERMON XXVIII.

LUKEWARMNESS.*

Rev. iii. 14—16.

"*These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.*"

They are startling words, and therefore are meant to be startling. For God does not put into His Word words without a reason. They are put there, because those, to whom they speak, need to be startled, and if they are not startled out of their state of security, would, like those lying down to sleep on the snow, perish in it. Yet they are only startling, because we have in us too much which is akin to those, to whom Jesus spoke so startlingly.

We can have no doubt, that our Lord means to condemn, as a very pronounced evil, those whom He censures as "cold." They are the very extremest opposite to those to whom He gives the noble title, ζεστός, "fervent," as that fervent ardent follower of

* Preached at a College-Service, 1st Sunday in Lent, 1877.

Jesus desired that *they* should be, whose "[a] faith was spoken of throughout the whole world," or as Apollos was in the first glow of his love for Christ, "[b] boiling, ζέοντες," "[c] fervent in spirit."

How, in what way, those whom our Lord calls "cold," became so, He does not say. He does not say, that they had 'cast off grace,' or 'apostatized.' He only speaks of their *actual* state, that they were wholly without grace and separate from His Holy Spirit and from Himself. I can scarcely think, that our Lord means those, of whom He taught His Apostle to speak so awefully, "[d] those who had tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," and had yet fallen away. Perhaps they sinned in ignorance, or were outside of the Gospel altogether. *Then*, in the first fervour of the Gospel, they can hardly have *come* into this state, without knowing it. However, our Lord does not say, "*whence* they had fallen," but in what state they *were*. He does not say, whether they had once had a glow of love; what were the beginnings of their conversion. If they had fallen from grace which they once had, there may have been as many different ways of falling, as there were souls who had fallen. He only speaks of that, which they had in common, that they had no love of God; they were as cold to the love of God, as ice is to the touch. They were wholly without Him. While they remained such, they had no life in them. God is a fire of love. These were wholly without it.

[a] Rom. i. 8. [b] Acts xviii. 25.
[c] Rom. xii. 11. [d] Heb. vi. 4, 5.

He speaks not of the present. Neither class, neither the cold nor the lukewarm, could be saved, or could see God, as they were. He speaks only of the more or less of hopefulness of their state. As there was more hope of the publicans and harlots, that they should enter the kingdom of Heaven, than of the Pharisees[e]; as "[f] many should come from the East and the West and sit down in the kingdom of Heaven, while the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness;" so with these. He says that this class, whom He calls 'lukewarm,' were in a more hopeless state than those, altogether apart from Him. Both were separate from Him; both those who were openly apart from Him, and those who, outwardly, were continually drawing nigh unto Him; who thought that everything was well with them, when all was quite ill. But the Pharisee, or the lukewarm Christian Bishop and those like him in Laodicea (whose lukewarmness was fostered by a wealthy, prosperous, intellectual condition like our own) had this, over and above, against them, that they were deceiving themselves, and so their case was the more hopeless.

They had this still in their favour, that although they were keeping themselves inwardly apart from God, God had not parted with *them*. 'I am about' (μέλλω) our Lord says, 'to cast thee from Me.' He had not then yet done it. Nay, He still appeals to them, how they might make *that* real, which was but seeming good. They thought themselves rich, and in need of nothing: He counsels them, how they might become really rich, and so teaches that the

[e] S. Matt. xxi. 31. [f] Ib. viii. 11, 12.

true riches were within their reach. Their inward shame did not yet appear, He counsels them how it might be altogether hid,—hid, as He says, from His own sight, since He would hide it; as He says, "[g] Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven and whose sin is covered." They thought that they saw, and so blinded themselves; our Lord counsels them to obtain from Him the true vision.

To become like the *cold*, would only be to precipitate themselves, whither they were in peril of going, and the more hopelessly because they had once been enlightened. They could not be like the heathen, because God had made them, other, and brought them into covenant with Himself. The seal which they had from Him, would but mark them as renegades. But they were already like them, in that, although themselves objects of God's love, they were destitute well-nigh of spiritual gifts; and yet each knew not that he was *the* wretched and pitiable and poor and blind and naked, amid his imagined wealth and need of nothing. Our Lord, Who by Nathan said to David, "thou art the man" would draw off the veil from his eyes, and says, *Thou* art *the* wretched and *the* pitiable, σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ὁ ἐλεεινὸς.

What then is the characteristic peril of his condition? I fear that it concerns us, with our national character, much to know; and it concerns ourselves too, lest we partake of it unawares. For our idol is respectability. Our literature is outwardly decent, while a corresponding literature of our neighbours is coarse. Theirs is outspoken evil; they draw off the veil, while our's casts a thin gauze over the inner

[g] Ps. xxxii. 1.

foulness. The cold is so far the least evil of the two; it is less misleading, than the sensational. But more widely. We still say, with those of a past generation: 'above all, no zeal,' 'no boiling over, no enthusiasm.' It would seem (as was said by one not, alas! of our communion, of themselves), as if the world were on fire with enthusiasm and it was our business to put it out. We would not be "fervid;" our love of respectability would hinder us from being "cold." Are we then so sure that our popular religionism is not just what our Lord rejects?

What then is its evil and its peril? The special peril is, its self-deceit; as our Lord continues to point out. Its evil is, that it knows neither its Maker nor itself, and desires not to know either; that its one object, in a world of trial and conflict, is to be at peace, without conflict; that, in a world, whose law is progress, it thinks to stand still, as to its real self, and yet not to lose the race for "[h]the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ;" that God having made it for Himself and His everlasting, ever-unfolding love, it may make itself, not God, its end, and yet may not miss the end, for which God created it,—that mutual everlasting love;—to be itself the object of His good pleasure, to have Himself as the Exhaustless Fountain of all good, 'its wisdom, its portion, its possession, its treasure,' in whose transporting exstatic love, itself, its '[i]mind and its heart, might ever remain fixed and firm and rooted immoveably?'

This then is its central evil, that its whole being

[h] Phil. iii. 14.

[i] From Prayer of S. Bonaventura after Holy Communion.

is revolving round a wrong centre; that its centre, that to which it refers its acts, its efforts, its thought, its contemplation, is self, not God. It may be difficult to us to picture a zealous soul: we may know too little of it. But we can scarcely help knowing something of the character of a lukewarm soul. What is his one object from morning to night, except to live with as much ease as is consistent with success in the object of this world, which he sets before himself? Certain overt acts he knows to be deadly sins, and these are not to be done without knowing that he is parting with God, and on the way to be lost for ever. And he wishes to be on good terms with God; but those terms, as easy to himself as he can persuade himself God will allow to pass. He scarcely can formally ask himself, 'Will God indeed allow this?' He will not disturb himself by bringing the doubt before him. He rather takes it for granted, that He will. He says, 'God will not be so particular.' 'There is no harm in it.' 'It hurts no one but myself;' 'it is but a little thing;' as if many little things did not become large things; as if many little debts did not make a large debt; as if small grains of sand would not overwhelm a caravan; as if a tiny neglected leak would not sink a vessel, as surely as a giant wave which engulphs it at once.

But this result comes in time only. The habitual central state is its neglect,—I may say, although *it* would not,—contempt of God. "[k] Wherein," they say, "have we despised Thee?" Is it not to despise God, to take notice of His law, only to as-

[k] Mal. i. 6.

certain how much we may neglect of it? Is it not to despise Him, to think with how little He will be satisfied, to refuse Him as much as we can without notable guilt; to choose to displease Him, as much as one may hope will not mortally offend Him and make Him cast off our soul for ever. Every law which God has given is openly and notoriously broken; yet the lukewarm soul counts it but a little thing.

He bids us love Him with all our hearts: 'We do not aspire to be saints,' the soul says.

He bids us *not* come to Him, "[l] setting up our idols in our hearts." The lukewarm soul makes itself as many idols as it has interests, and forgets God for them.

He bids us not take His Name in vain. God is appealed to without men's thinking of it.

He bids us "[m] pray without ceasing." The lukewarm soul hurries over what prayers it says, in order to satisfy itself, that it has not neglected its prayer to God, rather than hoping for any grace or adoring the only God, its 'God and its All.'

He tells us, "[n] blessed are the pure in heart." Defiled imaginations are the uniform preparation for overt sin. Men or boys read what they know to be evil for them. It is but *this* report of a trial, or *that* story, or *this* speech which would not be uttered before a sister, or *this* veiled allusion. It is but *this* or *that*, and the soul which Christ had made white, like His own raiment at the Transfiguration, is defiled irrevocably.

[l] Ezek. xiv. 3, 4, 7. [m] 1 Thess. v. 17; S. Luke xviii. 1.
[n] S. Matt. v. 8.

"[o] Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." What else is there?

"[p] Speak not evil, one of another," says God. And we do nothing else. To speak good were insipid.

"[q] He that soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously. God loveth a cheerful giver." And who well-nigh, amid our self-indulgence, our luxuries, our refinements, seems to care for the promised harvest of the love of God? We see diligent anxiety, that nothing should be wasted on the undeserving; (as if our own deserts of God were so abundant!) what proportionate pains is there to relieve the poor of Christ, whose hands are His Hands which were pierced for love of us?

But is there no peril that, amid all this anxiety that God should not get more than His exact due, the soul should not come to look upon Him, as a taskmaster rather than as its only Good? Where is its love? We know, how it is with earthly love. Love does not think it can do too much for the object of its love; the more it does, the more it longs to do; the more it knows the sweetness of loving and being loved again, the more it is borne toward the object of its love: even when absent in sight, it is present in mind. Can love for God be so wholly unlike the natural love with which He has gifted His creatures? Can love for His creature be burning, zealous, unselfish, and love for Himself not go out of itself to Him? Can it be concentrated in self?

And this state grows, like every other. We be-

[o] S James iii. 16. [p] Ib. iv. 11. [q] 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.

come habitually blinder or more quicksighted. We know this, as to things of this world, or as to our feelings. To whatever men give their mind, they see it more acutely; men's minds seem to be almost preternaturally sharpened: to whatever men are inured, to that they are dulled. A bad atmosphere stifles imperceptibly. Apart then from the withdrawal of neglected graces, the soul which has driven hard bargains with God, will drive harder yet: the soul, which so often deafens itself to those knockings at the door of its heart, at last bars fast its gates: the soul which so often tampers with the secret whispers of God's Holy Spirit as to right and wrong, at last loses its sense of what is right or wrong: the soul which often will not see, at last loses the power to see, like those creatures, living deep in the dark caves of the earth, which lose their sight, because they have never used it. 'Often,' says a careful observer of human nature[r], 'have we seen the cold and carnal, the worldly and Pagan, attain to spiritual fervour; the lukewarm and animal never have we seen.'

'Through tepidity,' says another[s] who had watched closely our growth, our life, our decay, 'men may pass from cold to heat, or may return from heat to cold—As before tepidity cold hath hope, so, after cold, tepidity is well-nigh desperate. For he who is yet in sins, loseth not the hope of conversion. But he who, after conversion, becometh tepid, hath withdrawn the hope which there might be of a sinner.' The lukewarm soul is continually

[r] Cassian. Coll. iv. c. 19.

[s] S. Greg. Pastor. iii. 34. Opp. ii. 94. Ben.

deafening itself to every whisper of that voice promised us in the Gospel, "[t] Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left." Wherein should it end, but that he who *would* not hear, could not. "[u] Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

So might it be said to those who knew no more of God than what He revealed of Himself on Mount Sinai. For I have spoken only of the common relations, now so widely ignored, of man to his God, the creature to his Creator. "[x] A son," God says, "honoureth his Father, and a servant his lord. If I am a Father, where is My honour? If I am a Lord, where is My fear?" 'If thou art a servant, give to thy lord the service of fear; if a son, shew to thy father, the affection of piety. Thou, unthankful, neither lovest nor fearest God. Thou art either a contumacious servant or a proud son.'

But what in the Gospel? Did God become Man to redeem thee, to have such a niggard service as this? Did Jesus give Himself wholly for thee, that that thou mightest be for ever calculating, how much thou mightest withhold from Him?

What is it, which we believe as Christians? Science has done thus much for us, to set before our eyes the all-but-infinity of the works of our God. The limits of time and space have almost vanished from our conceptions. Enlarged time is no measure for eternity: space, boundless to us, has no relation to infinity. Still the thought brings before us this,

[t] Isa. xxx. 21. [u] S. John viii. 47.

[x] Mal. i. 6. and Pusey Comm. p. 598.

how absolutely nothing the utmost stretch of created imagination is to the truth of the Infinity of our God. It preaches to us, "[y] What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou so regardest him?" What He has done for inhabitants of other worlds, we know not, because it does not concern us to know. But He *has* been mindful of us, He *has* regarded us. And what He has done for us, re-echoes through those boundless spheres of rational creation. For "[z] to the principalities and the powers in heavenly places is known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." '[a] The heavenly powers and the glory of the Angels and the princes visible and invisible, believe in the Blood of Christ.' They too believe, that their and our Infinite God disdained not the narrow mansion of the Virgin's womb; for our salvation, and to teach them too the wondrous condescension of our God. '[b] The Cross of Christ profited not us only, but the angels and all the powers in heaven; and opened to them a mystery[c] of the love of God, 'which, before' they knew not.' And shall they, when they saw His Glory, sing, Holy, Holy, Holy, and we alone be lukewarm?

What is it to be a Christian? What, but to be born of God, to be sons of God, sons of God in His

[y] Ps. cxliv. 3.

[z] Eph. iii. 10—12. [a] S. Ignat. Ep. ad Smyrn. n. 6.

[b] S. Jer. on Eph. iii. 9. Opp. vii. 594. Vall.

[c] Sacramentum.

well-beloved Son, '[d]brethren of Christ; and not brethren of Christ only, but co-heirs; not co-heirs only, but members; not members only, but a temple; not a temple only, but instruments of the Spirit?' What is it, but to be as closely united to God, as created being can be, except the Sacred Humanity of our Lord, '[e]Deiform, capacious of God whole and alone?' What is it but '[f]to have the Son in thyself and, being transformed into His likeness, to have been brought into one kindred and one species with Him.' What is it but that '[g]the body of the regenerated becomes the flesh of the Crucified?' that '[h]we are incorporated into Christ, and made flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone? What is it but, as we so often hear, to 'dwell in Christ and Christ in us, to be made one with Christ and Christ with us?' What is it but, if we remain His servants to the end, to have heaven and the glories of heaven, what "[i]eye hath not seen, nor ear heard nor heart of man conceived," open to us. What is it, but to enter into the joy of our own Lord?

And to what end all this love? That we should be just as if God had never loved us, as if Christ had never died for us, never given Himself for us, never made us His own, never given Himself to us? What does He Himself say, "[k]Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." What say His Apostles, men of like infirmities with our-

[d] S. Chrys. Orat. ad Neoph. ap. S. Aug. c. Julian. i. 6. n. 21.
[e] S. Greg. Naz. Orat. 30 [Theol. iv.] c. 6 p. 544 Ben.
[f] S. Chrys. in Gal. iii. 27 Opp. x. 704 Ben.
[g] S. Leo de Pass. Dom. Serm. 4. [h] S. Chrys. in Eph. v. 30.
[i] 1 Cor. ii. 9. [k] S. Matt. v. 48.

selves, but by the Holy Ghost? What says he whose life was Christ living in him? "[l] That ye may be transformed by the renewal of your mind to prove what is the Will of God, the good and acceptable and perfect." To this we are to grow into Him, to "[m] a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." This is the object of prayer, "[n] that ye may stand perfect and complete in every Will of God." This is what is held out to us, "[o] that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing."

Does this seem impossible? Well may it. But it is the end, not the beginning. All perfection in every art, knowledge, science, eminence, seems impossible to him who beginneth.

Love; and all things are possible. Love; and, through Christ instrengthening, all things are possible; for He maketh them possible. Love; and thou hast it already in earnest. "[p] Love," God Himself says, "is the bond of perfectness." '[q] Love begun,' says one of the most accurate Doctors of the Church, 'is righteousness begun; love advanced is righteousness advanced; great love is great righteousness; love perfected is righteousness perfected;' here, as belongs to our pilgrim-state; but, throughout, not as our own, but as the gift of God, 'diffused in our hearts, not through any power of nature or will in us, but through the Holy Spirit, which is given to us, Who helpeth our infirmity and cöoperateth to our healing.'

We pray God continually, that we may *perfectly*

[l] Rom. xii. 2. [m] Eph. iv. 13.
[n] Col. iv. 12. [o] S. James i. 4. [p] Col. iii. 14.
[q] S. Aug. de nat. et grat. end. Opp. x. 164.

love Him. We love so little, because we so little contemplate the vehemence of the love of Jesus for us, the inextinguishable furnace of His charity. In this season of His Holy Fasting for us, which leads on to His Passion for us, gain, some few minutes daily, in which to think in detail, on what Jesus suffered, to abolish the sentence against us, and to obtain for us, sinners, grace and glory. Enter into the Heart of thy Lord, which beat with love for thee. The Passion of Jesus is the book where saints learned their love. Think, 'What shall I give unto the Lord for the great love with which He has loved me;' and ask Him, the Fountain of all love, that ye may love Him, if not as He deserves, yet in some proportion or likeness to His boundless love, with all thy mind and strength; Him Who loved thee and gave Himself for *thee*, who hast by thy sins so often anew crucified Him. Abstinence withdraws the fuel from sin; yet, whether thou canst do this or no, abstain from all unlove, in thought word and deed, to thy fellow-sinners. Sin is very unloving, very selfish. 'Well-begun,' they say, 'is half done.' Begin to-day. "[r]To-day is" ever "the day of salvation." Jesus will lead thee on, step by step, day by day, unto His Throne, the seat of joys which never end; for they are Himself.

[r] 2 Cor. vi. 2.

SERMON XXIX.

FASTING.*

S. Matt. iv. 1, 2.

"*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and when He had fasted forty days and forty nights He was afterward an hungred.*

Our modern religionists have, for the most part, a very strange way of acting towards God and His word. It is nothing strange, alas! if any openly deny it to be God's word. These, without their will, only fulfil His prophecy, that "there should be scoffers in the last days[a]." It is nothing strange, that men, having heard God's word, should go their way and be choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life and bring no fruit to perfection. Strange indeed, in one way, it is, that men should prefer what is so shortlived to what is eternal; things which perish in the grasp to our God, the one living, unvarying Good; the fading flowers of the pleasures of sense to the torrent of joy with which God will inundate every faculty and sense of those who love

[a] 2 S. Pet. iii. 3.

* Preached at a College-Service, 1st Sunday in Lent, 1875.

Him, sating but never cloying, old yet ever new, for evermore. Yet these deliberately prefer the pleasures of sense which they have felt, to what God reveals to them, but which as yet "[b] eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor heart of man conceived."

Again, strange as it is, it was a heathen who became a great saint, who, when converted and a Christian, would he had never been the sinful self which he once had been, who, at the very commencement of his early youth prayed to God, '[c] Give me chastity and continency, only not yet.' For he feared lest God should hear him soon. Only he *was* a heathen, when he made the heathen prayer, and knew not the God, to Whom he prayed. Strange it was, to fasten fetters upon himself, from which he hoped one day to be freed, to make it impossible except for Almighty Grace to free him. And yet this is what sinners do every day, and then deny their free-will, because they have enslaved it. That raven-cry, 'only not yet,' is probably the one prayer of those who neglect to turn to God *now*. Yet these presume on the mercy of God which they outrage, and forget that it would be a contradiction for God to make a heaven for the proud or the sensual, since they would carry thither within them their own hell.

You, who are here to-day, profess by your being here, that you do not belong to these classes. You do, I trust, honestly mean to obey God's law. And yet, I fear, that there is hardly a law of God, scarcely a word of our Redeemer, which, if you look at it in the face, see what it means, what it re-

[b] 1 Cor. ii. 9. [c] S. Aug. Conf. B. viii. § 17. Oxf. Tr.

quires of you, you could pretend to yourselves that you were even in the way of keeping it. It has become an acknowledged saying, almost as a revelation from God, that 'the Bible, and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants.' I fear much that the stress, in the popular mind which uses it, lies in the negative part of this saying, that nothing is a part of their religion, which is not set down in plain unmistakeable words in the Bible. But, for the positive side, that all which is in the Bible is their religion, I fear that they do not even think what it involves.

Take our Lord's words. We believe that He was the Eternal Word, that every word which He spoke was eternal truth, that, as He said, "[d] My words shall not pass away." Which well nigh do people even set themselves in these days to obey? We admire, of course, that sum of His teaching, the Sermon on the Mount. We cannot but admire it; we could even discourse eloquently in praise of it, and set it above the words of any human teacher. What of it do we obey? I do not say, what of it does not sound like music in our ears, as, on solemn occasions, we hear it. It falls soothingly upon them, for it is our Lord, the sole Fountain of blessing, pronouncing men blessed, and telling us of reward in store. But I ask, Save when our Lord tells us not to do things, to which we are not inclined, what do we even set ourselves to keep? How is our Lord to us other than Ezekiel was to those, whose condemnation God pronounced by him, "[e] Lo thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a

[d] S. Matt. xxiv. 35. [e] Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument; for they hear thy words and do them not." We can fancy that we keep His commands, not to pray, or not to fast, "[f] *to be seen of men;*" but no one would think the better of us, perhaps the worse, if we were known to pray much, or to fast at all. They would call us perhaps 'drones' for spending time in prayer, and ridicule our fasts. We congratulate ourselves any how, that we are in these things not hypocrites, though how far this is so as to almsgiving, which people *do* praise, or how far this is consistent with all our public subscriptions, I am not bound to think. But in all which our Blessed Lord says positively, how can we imagine that we are even setting ourselves in the way to obtain His blessings by forming in ourselves, through His grace, that mind, which He pronounces "blessed." I will say nothing of His "[g] Blessed are the poor;" for all almost are agreed that poverty is the greatest possible evil to those whom in God's Providence it befalls. But any how, "[h] Blessed are the poor in spirit;" and with us to be poor-spirited is a term of reproach; to refuse to risk murdering another or being murdered by him, was any how not long ago contrary to the laws of honour. Of meekness we should scarce know the meaning, except in some poor sufferer, who took patiently what God laid upon him. Our idea of "mourning" is to call ourselves, with our neighbours, 'miserable sinners' a few times in the week, which we forget mostly as soon as said; certainly at the Church door. "Hunger and thirst after righteousness;" where is there

[f] S. Matt. xxiii. 5. [g] S. Luke vi. 20. [h] S. Matt. v. 3.

any trace in our spirits, of those two most preying disquieting needs of our bodily frame? Or of purity of heart, when men think it much to abstain from unseemly jests, and leave this to their sisters? Or peace-making, when our chronic condition is quarrelling? Or mercy, amid this almost universal exaction of one's dues, our miles of human misery in our large towns, our prostituted female orphans, our teaching of the poor, on the condition that they should hear nothing of God, know nothing of God, not hear the name of their Redeemer Who died for them; one should think, that but for a few ladies, who bear its name and do its deeds, mercy, like justice in heathenism, had sought its parent skies, to be alas! a witness not for us, but against us. Christ now too wanders up and down, "[1] not having where to lay His Head." As for persecution for righteousness' sake, we have good reason to thank our God, that He has spared us the trial, even at the loss of the annexed blessing.

But this being so, so far from its being probable that any practice implied by Holy Scripture is not a duty, because it is neglected, we may the rather think that it is, probably, a duty because it is neglected, or that if it is performed at all, it is performed inadequately.

Why did our Blessed Lord fast those forty days and forty nights, which we plead to Him to-day? His sinless Flesh needed not discipline, like our's. He had no sins, for which, like the Psalmist, to humble His soul with fasting. His serene Soul, Which ever beheld His Father, needed not to be

[1] S. Matt. viii. 20; S. Luke ix. 58.

kept down by the subdual of the body. 'For our sakes' it doubtless was, as we also plead to Him. All which He endured in His innocent Frame and Soul was meritorious for us; all went to fill up that Cup of suffering, which His Father gave Him to drink for us, which culminated in that Death, which was the Atonement for our sins.

But why this special suffering of those forty days and forty nights' unbroken fast, day after day, passed amid the gnawings of hunger, the parching of thirst, the pinching of cold, the hard earth for His pillow, the wild beasts for His companions? Holy Scripture says nothing, and so we may imagine several grounds. But we *must* think this specially, that since it was not for Himself, it was for us and to teach us. Be it that it was humiliation for sin. Should He, our Redeemer, thus humble Himself for our sins, and we not so humble ourselves for our own? What a light it casts on those penitential Psalms, which we said last Wednesday, as the beginning of the humiliation of Lent, "[k] My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread." Be it that He willed at once to give occasion to the adversary to tempt Him through His bodily exhaustion, in order to defeat him in that temptation of the body, whereby he had overcome our first parents, and to strengthen the Flesh which He took for us by fasting; what else would His act be, than instruction to us, how to supple and train our frames for the strife of temptation? Be it that He thereby prepared His frame for the Ministry upon which He was about to enter; what

[k] Ps. cii. 4.

else does He teach as Man than that fasting is a good preparation for every work of the service of God? Or was it, that a state of fasting was most congenial and harmonious with that contemplation[1] and communion with His Father, with Whom, apart from all intercourse with sinful man, He passed those forty days and forty nights? Or was it, that, as He said to the Apostles, "[m] This kind" of evil spirit "goeth not out but by prayer and fasting," so before His whole warfare with the Evil one, whom He came to subdue and to bind, He willed first, in that long fast and prayer, to commend to His Father the souls whom He came to save, and the whole great work of the destruction of the empire of the rulers of the darkness of this world? What else can this teach, than that in our own personal conflict with the Evil one, who is ever seeking whom he may devour, whom we are ever praying God to 'beat down under our feet,' our prayers rise better to God, if winged by the self-subdual of fasting?

Or more widely still, He Who knew the future of the Church "which He purchased with His own Blood," knew that His Church (if not His Apostles) would form this season of Lent, on which we are just entering, as far as we should be capable, upon His own fast of forty days. And He sanctified our fast by His own. Are we not His disciples? Is He not our Example? Have we not a warfare with Satan, whom He subdued? Can any solemn act of His be without reference to us, and not involve our following Him as we can?

And not only this; but He laid it down, as a cha-

[1] S. Basil de jejunio n. 9. Opp. ii. 8. [m] S. Matt. xvii. 21.

racter of His disciples that they *should* fast. "[n]Then shall My disciples fast in those days," in the days when He should be absent from us in the Flesh. Is His prediction that we shall fast, less binding than a command? His word must stand. He does not say, that all shall be His true disciples. His word holds, though many be not His disciples. There is not one way only of ceasing to be His disciples. His word was fulfilled also in those who went back from following Him. "[o]Ye are not My sheep," He says to them, "as I said unto you." The words are plain, "My disciples shall fast." What then can it mean than that those who fast not, are not, so far at least, His disciples?

But He has told us, men say, "[p]not to fast to be seen of men." True; but the very command implies not only that we should fast, but that our true and real fasting would naturally have some effect upon our bodily frames, which we might parade, as the hypocrites who seek for human praise. He bids us use our fast as a feast, as a pious poet of our own burst out, 'Welcome, dear Feast of Lent.' The acts are the same; both alike fast; but the one parades, the other, by cheerfulness, disguises its effects on the frame.

The bodily fast avails not, Isaiah tells us, without the spiritual. Yet he says not the less, in his account of a fast well-pleasing to God; "[q]deal *thy* bread to the hungry," i. e. the bread which was, which would have been, thine. 'Give to another,' says a father[r], 'what thou withdrawest from thyself;

[n] S. Luke v. 35. [o] S. John x. 26. [p] S. Matt. vi. 18.
[q] Isa. lviii. 7. [r] S. Greg. Hom. in Evang. xvi. 6.

that the flesh of thy needy neighbours may be recruited through that, whereby thy own flesh is afflicted.' The prophet does not repeal the law of Moses, but forbids unmercifulness which contradicts that law.

But the law of fasting is no insulated law. It is no mere positive law which ends in itself, which, if it be done, this is pleasing to Almighty God, because it is obedience to His command. It is indeed a means to an end; it relates to this our condition in the flesh; it is not eternal; but the end to which it relates, *is* eternal, our salvation.

You know the well-known place in which S. Paul compares the discipline then used by athletics for *their* end, and the Christian's for his. That temporal discipline for that temporal end was very severe. But it was counted and *was*, essential to the end. "[s] Every one," not he only who runneth a race but every one who contendeth in the exercises, "is temperate," uses self-control, "*in all things*." To have the mastery over others, he must, in these lower things too, first have mastery over himself. It is to us a startling discipline of the body. And this too of that sort, which is theologically expressed by the word 'continent[t].' 'Look well,' says a heathen[u], 'on the whole, what precedes and what follows and thus set to work.' And then he sets forth 'the privation of delicacies, the well-ordering of life, the eating by regimen, the burning heat, the cold, the abstinence from self-indulgence and from wine, the delivering one's self over to the president as to a physician.'

[s] 1 Cor. ix. 25. [t] ἐγκρατής. [u] Epictetus iii. 15

You are many of you familiar with the poetic description

> [x] Qui studet optatam cursu contendere metam
> Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit,
> Abstinuit venere et vino.

But for their absorbing excitement, one could almost wish the Olympic games back again, if they were but weighted with such self-discipline. In these days, they would be models of asceticism. Such was their practice for ten continuous months [y]. S. Paul likens act to act: the difference was only in the end: "[z] they for a corruptible crown, we for an incorruptible." They too had to count the cost, either not to begin, or to bind themselves by oath to persevere to the end [y]. S. Paul applies it to himself with all the terms of the art. "[a] I then so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as striking the air;" but he had a domestic enemy, with whom to contend—his own body, as the minister to the temptations of all the sins of the flesh: "I strike heavily my body and enslave it" (lest it should enslave him), "lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Can any one doubt that S. Paul disciplined his own body? And what body? That body, says a father [b], 'which filled up what was lacking of the sufferings of Christ, which sowed His Gospel every where, through which he traversed the world, through which Christ spake, from which a light flashed brighter than any lightning'—'those limbs, now living, but deadened while he lived; in all

[x] Hor. Ars Poet. 412.
[y] Pausan. Eliac. i. 24.
[z] 1 Cor. ix. 25.
[a] Ib. 26, 27.
[b] S. Chrys. on Rom. Hom. 32. pp. 506, 509. Oxf. Tr.

which Christ lived, the crucified to the world, the limbs of Christ, clad with Christ, that shrine of the Spirit, that holy building, those limbs bound in the Spirit, nailed to the fear of God, bearing the marks of the nails of Christ.' But if he, who 'had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful to man to utter,' yet had 'a messenger from Satan to buffet him,' needed thus to subdue his flesh to the Spirit, in what condition are we?

Yet granted for the time, that flesh and spirit were firm friends (and I believe that they are too often in evil, and that the spirit is the most in fault, that men have too often not to complain of the body since the soul itself is the origin of the evil), what of the spirit? what of repentance? You can scarcely think that you need no repentance, for which we continually pray; else certainly you have no occasion to come here, and have no need of Him Who "[c]came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." The gates of heaven have already opened to you, and ye are in the everlasting habitations. But if you know that you are sinners, if you believe that you have a Redeemer, and that that Redeemer died for your sins, that He shall be your Judge, and will forgive not the impenitent but all penitent sinners; then observe how much fasting stands connected with repentance, that its office is even more towards the spirit than the flesh. So it was with all penitents, whose penitence has been recorded in Holy Scripture. You remember how David fasted, and for seven days ate no bread; how he says, "[d]I hum-

[c] S. Matt. ix. 13. [d] Ps. xxxv. 13.

bled my soul with fasting;" "[e]I wept, my soul in fasting;" how Daniel set himself "[f]to seek the Lord God by prayer and supplication, with fasting," and so confessed his own sins and the sins of his people, and was heard. On another three weeks' fast God revealed to him the future of his people, and how he should stand in his lot in the end[g]. The prophet Joel preached to us at the beginning of our Lent, or rather God by him. "[h]Turn unto Me with all your hearts, and with weeping and with fasting and with mourning, and rend your heart and not your garments;" and I fear all of his preaching which full many carry off is "not" to "rend their garments." The heathen of Nineveh felt that they were not only to put away the violence of their hands, but to chasten their spirits through their bodily frames. And it is our Lord Who sets forth their repentance as a witness *to* us: may it not be, against us!

Does not nature itself teach it us? What would you think of *his* sorrow, who with one dead in his house, took thought to have a meal of delicacies, and fared sumptuously? But a dead soul is a far sadder sight than death of the body. '[i]Let him add to his expenditure,' exclaims an ancient father; 'let him get together fatlings of a monstrous growth; let him refine old wines; and when one shall ask, On whom dost thou lavish these things? let him say, I have sinned against God, and am in danger of perishing everlastingly; and therefore I am anxious and I pine away and torture myself,

[e] Ps. lxix. 10. [f] Dan. ix. 3. [g] Ib. x. 2; xii. 13.
[h] Joel ii. 12, 13. [i] Tert. de pœnit. n. xi. p. 368. O.T.

that I may reconcile unto myself that God Whom I have offended by my sin.'

But if, or rather since, this neglect of fasting is a mistake, it is a very grave one. Prophets, Psalmists, histories, God's saints, our Lord Himself, the Holy Ghost teach the value of fasting, for self-mastery, for penitence, for salvation; and men neglect it. What have we to say, but that dull, 'I like it not; others don't fast?' Now were it the question of some remedy for a bodily ill, something which should save a loved life, and a countless multitude of those who had tried this remedy were to declare its benefits, which would you regard, those who had tried it and had felt its benefits, or those who, not having tried it, declaimed against it?

They who have tried it, say that 'fasting is Angels' food[k],' '[l] the death of vices, the life of virtues, the strength of minds, the vigour of souls, their spiritual springtide;' '[m] that it heals the soul's diseases, expels ill thoughts, makes the heart clean; it is the heart's refreshment, heals its wounds, softens inflamed consciences, abolishes sins, gives devotion and confidence to prayer.'

But more, it is *now* a following of Christ. '[n] Why should not the members follow the Head? Since we have received good from this Head, why not endure hardness with Him? It is no great thing to fast with Christ, if we are to sit with Him at the table of the Father. It is no great thing, that the member should suffer with the Head, with Whom it is to be glorified. Blessed member, which in all

[k] Lyra Ap. N. 36. [l] S. Chrys. [m] S. Bern. p. 829.
[n] S. Bern. in cap. jejunii. Serm. i. p. 812.

things cleaves to this Head and follows Him whithersoever He goeth. Good is it, to cleave to Thee, Thou glorious Head blessed for evermore, into which the Angels desire to look. Thou bearest our griefs; Thou grievest for us: Thou passest first through the narrow opening of the Passion to make a wide entrance for Thy members who follow Thee!'

Fear not, if the path be new to thee. Vice wears the frame, impairs the understanding. Well-regulated fasting braces it. Take advice about it. But if haply thou canst not fast, at least thou mayest cut off luxuries and feed the poor, yea Christ, with what thou withholdest from thyself. One material of self-indulgence[o], which was absolutely unknown some forty years ago would, if foregone, feed Christ in some thousands in Whom He is a hungered, and no one gives Him the crumbs which fall from their table.

Only remember, that the fast be spiritual also. 'Let the eye,' said a holy man[p], 'fast from curious, dangerous gazings and all petulance, that being well humbled, it may be restrained in penitence, which aforetime wandered in fault. Let the ear fast from evil pruriency, from idle tales, and hearing of evil. Let the tongue fast from detraction and murmuring, from idle, vain, or scurrilous words. Much more let the soul itself fast from vices and from self-will.'

And amid this self-restraint, let it pray with humbled heart and a contrite spirit, with the publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." The faithful, humble, fervent prayer will enter heaven:

[o] Cigars. [p] S. Bern. in Quadr. Serm. iii. 2. p. 817.

fasting and alms will be wings to it; and it will not return void. No one ever passed a Lent humbly, penitently, with what strictness he could, who was not thereby helped on his way towards that glorious Easter morn which shall have no evening; for "[q]the Glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb," which for us was slain, "is the Light thereof."

[q] Rev. xxi. 23.

SERMON XXX.

GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION.

Job xix. 25.

"*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.*"

O great and wondrous confession of one who had seen death, but had never seen or heard of restored life! Death had then one wide undisputed reign over the whole world. For two thousand years it had been gaining a speedier victory over man's decaying strength. Whether the tree of life had power given it to prolong life, or whether that strength of life which man, when innocent, received first from his Maker's Hands, wore slowly away amid his increasing sins, man's power of resisting death, generation after generation, declined. Two thousand years had seen only one exception to that large rule of death, when Enoch was translated, because he walked with God and pleased God. They had seen the destruction of the whole race of man, except eight persons, when the whole face of the inhabited earth had become one grave. They had seen man and beast, wise and foolish, godly and ungodly, to man's sight,

perish together. "[a]Thou shalt surely die" was written deep on every human heart, and on every leaf in God's vast book of nature. Pictures there were of the Resurrection in the yearly decay and revival of nature. Every thing was subject to decay and change. The whole visible world seemed yearly to die, and yearly to revive. Yet these were pictures only. Death and decay had their sway at last, even after a man or a tree had seemed to dispute it for a thousand years. Nature was renewed; individuals perished and were dissolved. For so God had said, "[b]Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." None had then, even for a time, been restored from death to life.

And he who so spake, what was he? Himself half-dead. Shapeless, discoloured, decayed, corrupted, the very human form more disfigured than in one wholly dead, his very life was but an endurance of an almost living death. One formless loathsome mass of ulcer and corruption was he from head to foot. "[c]My breath," he says, "is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of my own body;" "[d]My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken and become loathsome." Disease had already begun in him the dishonour of the grave.

Faith is most sorely tried, when the Hand of God touches ourselves. Yet even then the Patriarch Job believed in the Coming of Christ, Whom on earth he was not to see; he believed that that Redeemer, Who was to come, "akin to us," had then

[a] Gen. ii. 17.
[b] Ib. iii. 19.
[c] Job xix. 17.
[d] Ib. vii. 5.

too life in Himself, and should come to redeem him also. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." *He* should at the end "stand, the Last" as well as the First, with power "over the dust;" and though the worms should prey upon and bore through this poor body, he himself, for himself, should, out of that very flesh, behold and gaze on God.

This is the mystery of our Easter joy, this the special faith of Christians; not a mere continuance of our being, not only a life to come, but a life through the life of our Redeemer, a life through His victory over death, a life wherein in this very flesh, now poor, corruptible, suffering, fainting, shrinking, easily affrighted, we shall, ourselves for ourselves, face to Face, behold our God.

Great, glorious words! Often have they sounded in our ear, at times when our hearts were dead within us as a stone, lifeless almost as were the frames of those we loved. Yet not lifeless, for they are instinct with life; not lifeless, for He Who knew them before they were, He, in Whose "[e] book were all our members written" when as yet they were not, knows, in the compass of the whole earth, in the sea, in the churchyard around us, each speck which shall be clothed with endless glory or with endless shame.

"I know," said the Patriarch. True faith is solid, sure as knowledge. God writes it on the heart, and the heart "knows" what it believes, more surely than the senses know what they perceive. The senses know what will pass away and be no more;

[e] Ps. cxxxix. 15. On the passage Job xix. 25—27., see 'Daniel the Prophet,' pp. 508, 509.

faith sees and knows what will abide for ever. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." What a volume of life and immortality! "*My* Redeemer," as surely "mine," as if there were no other to redeem. "My *Redeemer*," not only as paying the ransom for me, but as akin to me[f] for whom He pays it, and paying it for me, because He has a right in me as His own, and I in Him. "My Redeemer *liveth*." Christ was yet to come, to be born of our flesh, after some fifteen hundred years. Yet He, Who as Man was to be born, "liveth," the Patriarch says. He liveth, apart from time, "[g] He Who was and is and shall be," because He Is by an ever-present life. He "liveth," because the Son hath life in Himself, eternally derived from the Father, as the Father hath life in Himself. "He Who ever liveth" shall, the Patriarch proceeds, "stand the Last upon the dust." It is again a title of God, "[h] I am the First and I am the Last." Heaven and earth shall pass away; yet ere they pass away, He at Whose word they shall so pass, shall stand or arise with power over the dust. And as the fruit of this, "[i] out of my flesh I shall see God:" from that very flesh which they consume, shall I see Him; I shall behold Him for myself; *my* eyes shall behold Him; "mine," he says again, "and not another;" and that, although "my reins are consumed within me."

See, my brethren, how he contrasts, not only life with death, but life as the produce of death. And so it must be. After our bodies had through sin become subject to corruption, it had been endless

[f] גֹּאֲלִי
[g] Rev. i. 4.
[h] Isa. xliv. 6.
[i] Job xix. 26.

misery for them to have lived on for ever. What misery had it not been, to have lived on for ever, with our appetites, our passions, even if regulated; our hunger, our thirst, our weariness, our rest through sleep which is the image of death, our never-satisfied cravings, our longing for something new, our capacity for Infinity, while all around us is finite! What misery to have our memories clogged with things which we would gladly forget; our imaginations haunted with phantoms, from which we would long to be freed; thoughts, like the spectres of past sins, flitting before us, and blinding our sight to the things which we would behold!

And so God the Son took our nature upon Him in its purity, to make it to us a new origin of being. For us He was born, as Man; for us, to pay the ransom for us, He died; for us, not for Himself, He rose again. "[k] He rose for our justification." He rose to impart to us by His life, what by His Death He obtained for us; He rose, to be, to us also, the Resurrection and the Life; spiritual resurrection and spiritual life to us now; and in the end, our Resurrection and our Life Eternal; as having procured it, as Himself effecting it, as the Pattern of it, as Himself the End of it. He arose as our Head. But since He is our Head, where, but united with Him, should His members be? Since He is our Life, how should not His members live? Since, "[l] if one member suffers, the other members suffer with it," how should He not give to His members the bliss which He has and is?

Yes, my brethren, Jesus rose to give us all which

[k] Rom. iv. 25. [l] 1 Cor. xii. 26.

is His. He lived these forty days after the Resurrection, in order to shew us what He is, what we may become. Before His Death, for us He was encompassed with weakness; He bare our infirmities; He suffered through our natural infirmities; He was an hungered after the forty days fast; on the Cross, He suffered thirst; He sat down wearied by the well; He wept over the city and by the grave of Lazarus; in the Garden, He poured out Blood through His Agony. The rays of His Divinity flashed forth, when He spake as never man spake, when He drew by a word the hearts which He had made; when He commanded the elements, and they knew their Maker's voice; when devils owned Him Whom they envied and against Whom they rebelled. Yet these were the exception then. Then He partook of our sufferings, that He might hallow them, and impart to us, first His Death and then His Resurrection.

But after His Resurrection, the very being of His Body was spiritual. It was held by no laws of our earthly nature. It could be touched as a Body, that we might believe in the Resurrection. "[m] A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." But it was a Spiritual Body, although the full glories were hidden still.

Earthly likenesses can give no picture of heavenly glory; the glories of the most glorious created objects give not the faintest image of the glory Uncreated. They are but creatures; they are not God. Created beauty, created glory, created light, created goodness have a likeness to God, in so far as the

[m] S. Luke xxiv. 39.

Mind of God conceived them, the Will of God called them into being. It tells us then what we can conceive, and yet, as it were, as nothing, when we are told that the glory of our Glorified Lord is above the brightness of the sun, or that those who win many to righteousness shall shine as stars for ever and ever. 'No precious gems rival in colour and setting the transcendent loveliness of many of the double and triple stars[n].' 'One planet[o] surpasses in sublimity and grandeur any natural object within the cognizance of man.' The radiancy and glory from glorified bodies will be more piercing, more dazzling, more beauteous far. For it will not be created light. It will be the light of the Indwelling God. Earthly light is pure, beautiful, lovely; for God hath made it so. But it hath nothing of God. It speaks to us, as it were, 'If I am beautiful, what is He that made me! If I am beautiful, what will that beauty and glory be, which may be your's, to which I am but nothing! Now ye are dust and ashes; but, if ye have the grace of God within you, ye have that within you, which is as far above me, as God is above the work of His Hands.'

The glory of Christ began with the grave. What

'[n] As seen through a good telescope.' The language of an eminent Astronomer, having use of the exquisite telescopes of modern art. 'Few persons, I presume, have ever beheld the Nebulæ in Orion, or the Star cluster in Hercules, without the irrepressible feeling of astonishment and awe.'

'In a tiny bit of the Southern heavens, not occupying one tenth of the area of the Moon, John Herschel counted and telescopically observed 110 stars: he describes them as "a brilliant and beautiful object having the effect of a superb piece of fancy jewellery."'

'[o] Saturn, with its rings and belts and satellites.'

is the end of all earthly glory and greatness and wisdom and power, is but the beginning of the Heavenly. Then He appeared in the regions of death, as the Conqueror of Death; then He removed with Him in triumph to their blissful abodes those who had fallen asleep and who awaited His Coming. Thenceforward He appeared only in Glory and in power. Thenceforward He is, throughout the whole compass of the heavens, admired, adored, beheld with wondering awe by Angels, Archangels, Cherubim, and Seraphim. Thenceforward hath He all power in Heaven and in earth.

As to Him, so to us, if we are His, the grave is the vestibule to glory. '[p]The tokens of decay are the cockcrowing to the Resurrection.' "[q]We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Picture to yourselves then, as ye may, the glory of His Glorified Body. Picture It to yourselves, a Body, yet with such glory as created eye could not look upon. View It, transparent with Divine Light, arrayed with Divine Beauty, looking sweetly upon thee with Divine Loveliness, Majestic with Divine Glory, Intelligent with Divine Wisdom, Tender with Divine Compassion, and Love Itself, for God is Love: such, in thy measure, mayest thou be, if thou willest; such may be those whom thou lovest.

Such is thy reward, such thy likeness as to this poor body too. Yea rather, such is a portion only of thy reward even as to the body too, if thou willest. For as the body is a partaker with the soul here, so shall it be there. As here the body ministers to the soul, so also there, only not in these poor earthly

[p] Claudius. [q] 1 S. John iii. 2.

pleasures, but as fitted to its new state of being; overstreamed with delights, but incapable of suffering; transported with love and united with those it loves, but itself too, spiritual; joying in beauty, but the beauty of God, the beauty of souls and bodies resplendent with God. The pure pleasures and joys of this poor body too shall be higher, purer, more spiritual far, than the purest pleasures which the purest soul can conceive here. For soul and body shall be for ever indwelt by God, transformed by God into a spiritual nature, which heart of man cannot conceive now.

Yet this change and transformation, my brethren, must begin here. The Resurrection of Christ is the pattern of the resurrection of our poor bodies, but only, if we rise with Him in soul now. "[r] If ye have risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the Right Hand of God." He rose, that thou mightest rise; but first, from sin to grace, from vice to virtue, from things earthly to things spiritual, from love of self to the love of God. He rose once for all, that thou too mightest rise once for all; not to sink back anew into sin; not to have some good feelings for a while, and then to relapse into sin which for a time thou quittedst; not to be kindled for a moment by thoughts about thy Saviour's love, and then to be chilled again, or to burn with some false fire for some thing of earth; but to live to God. "[s] As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Christ, when raised up, lived no longer as a mortal man,

[r] Col. iii. 1. [s] Rom. vi. 4.

but by a new, spiritual, superhuman life. We too, as reborn of Him, members of Him, endued with His Spirit, if we will, changed by His grace, living through His life, we too must live superhuman lives. Not superhuman in these outward things, which our poor bodies yet need; but above the life of mere nature, through a Divine life of grace within us. How 'superhuman?' Human it is, to follow our appetites, to obey our passions, to be angry when provoked, to covet what we have not, to possess unlawfully what we desire, to desire man's praise, to enjoy whatever we can, and fill up an earthly present which can never satisfy us, with an earthly future, whose meagreness we are not forced to see until it comes. Super-human or above nature it is, not, in the least thing, wilfully and knowingly to displease God; by His grace to hold our passions in check; to forego what we desire, if it would displease God; to be content with what we have; to love God for His Goodness to us, and each other, because He loves them with us; to thank Him, to praise Him, to complain only to Him, to depend on Him, to trust in Him. Simple things these seem, my brethren. Simple and easy they will become to us, as we allow His grace to reign in us; but simple as they are, they are, when followed simply by His grace day by day, the royal road which leadeth where He, our Saviour Christ, is gone before, above the stars, above the heavens, to the Throne of God.

This road, my brethren, lies, not in feeling but in acting; not in longing but in obeying; not in detesting with the lips what we love in our hearts; not in renouncing the world, while we hold fast that

which keeps us bound in the love of the world; not in some passing acts of good, to compensate for the evil which we love more; not in outward costless reforms, while we cherish in our inmost souls the passions which master us, the darling vices which cling to us, as our very nature.

It consists in first giving our whole souls to God, yielding ourselves to His transforming grace, that He would change us as He wills, that He would cast out from us what is not His, and give us what is His; and then with steady unwavering step to obey each impulse of His grace, to refuse ourselves with steadfast soul whatever He, by our conscience or His Word, says within us, 'thou mayest not; this I have forbidden;' to do, though it seem hard at first, whatever He so saith, 'do this for love of Me.'

Does this seem hard, my brethren? It will seem hard, only until thou knowest the sweetness of pleasing God. It will not seem hard, if thou, day by day, beholdest in heart thy Risen Saviour, sitting on High, resplendent with Light, crowned with Glory unapproachable, radiant with love, looking down on thee, loving thee, ready to help thee, and saying to thee, 'This, if thou follow Me, have I won for thee. Follow, as thou canst, by My grace, My life on earth; above the earth and where I am, there shall My servant be. Incorruptible shalt thou be, as I am Incorruptible; incapable of suffering, as I also am; immortal through My Immortality; fine and beautiful in mould like My Glorious Body; filled with My joy and light and love. Fear not flesh and blood, fear not for yourselves, fear not for those ye love. Flesh and blood, as they are, cannot

inherit the kingdom of heaven; but Flesh and Blood, your Nature, has inherited the kingdom of heaven, and is, in Christ, sat down at the Right Hand of God, in the Throne of God; 'that where I am,' He says, 'there ye may be also.'

Fear not then. The gate indeed is the grave; we see only the closed door. We are not as yet entered in. But to each one who in His Grace has entered in, that gate is a glorious portal, opening to fields of light and homes of rest, and the company of saints, and the presence of Angels, and the sight of those we love, and the commenced bliss of eternity, to be perfected then, when "[t] our vile bodies shall be made like unto His glorious Body, according to the mighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

[t] Phil. iii. 21.

SERMON XXXI.

TRUE PEACE AND FALSE PEACE.*

S. John xx. 21.

"*Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you.*"

All crave for peace. People engage in that which is most opposite to peace, war, for the sake of peace. All at least, except those in a savage state, or those savages in the midst of civilization, conquerors. So necessary is peace to the human mind, that if men have not the true peace and are not minded to have it, they make themselves a false peace. You have doubtless many of you, doubted at times, 'Have I that peace which Jesus promised?' In some sudden pause amid the day's turmoil, in some moment of solitude, the sudden thought has come, 'How is it between me and my God?' Perhaps the soul turned away from the thought, or dismissed it with Felix's answer "[a] When I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee." Yet, probably, in God's mercy, it has come again. One, who often asked what seemed an intrusive question if the heart was to answer him not itself, 'Have you peace?' awakened misgivings in souls, which knew not what to an-

* Preached in the College-Service, Low Sunday, 1877.

[a] Acts xxiv. 25.

swer. And the question drove the soul within itself to ask itself, 'Is the state, in which I pass day by day, a true peace or a false?' True peace is, when the soul revolves round its centre, Almighty God, itself at one with itself, craving for nothing but what God continually supplies, its passions subdued to itself, itself lovingly loyal to God, in harmony with its God and His laws. There is only one other peace. God preserve you from it! It would be (if it were possible) to have rooted out or stupefied or drugged or numbed or paralysed the thought of God, of a life to come, of a retribution hereafter: to be *quite certain* that we are like the beasts that perish; to be under the dominion of "[b] the strong man armed," Satan, who "keepeth his palace, and his goods are in peace;" to be so blinded, that no ray of light can enter the sightless eyes; so stone-deaf, that no sound of truth can pierce the heavy ear: the heart so dulled that it cannot understand or have one heart-ache for itself or the ruin which it has made of itself. '[c] As perfect charity,' says a holy writer, 'casts out fear, so iniquity consummated gives security.' For since all peace, out of God, is false, it cannot be undisturbed, so long as there is any room for doubt, that there *may be* a God, a hereafter. For if there be another stage of being, conscience, until absolutely deadened, will surmise that it *may be* well or ill with it there, according to its doings here. The thought of God brings with it the thought of a Judge.

In the dimmest Heathen belief of a future, there has been the belief of a judgement in the realms be-

[b] S. Luke xi. 21. [c] S. Bern. 1 S. John iv. 18.

low. 'Now there is no escape, no resistance,' said a heathen Atheist[d], 'since we have to fear eternal punishment in death.' Between these two, perfect peace in God, and the peace of the silence of death under Satan, there are countless stages, as each class is approaching to the one term or the other. Men try to make to themselves a false peace: God gives the true. Satan can invent refined ways of false peace for the refined, or coarse for the coarse sensualist. Men can afford to despise coarse ways of procuring a false peace or stupefaction, through ways to which they are not inclined, excess of riot, or gross sensuality, slavery to their passions, or those things against which God warns us, alike in Lent and Easter, "[e] uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence." A man may abstain from steeping and drowning his conscience in such things, if not specially tempted thereto, and yet be as much a victim of false peace, as those whom he despises. Nay he may be the blinder of the two. The Pharisee was blinder, more hopelessly blind, than those whom he thanked God, that he did not resemble.

God made the soul for Himself, to have its bliss in His Infinite Unchanging Exhaustless Love. The soul then 'must needs be restless, until it repose in Him.' Everything, whether it belongs to the keenest intellect, or the lowest senses, is an idol if the soul rests in it, apart from its God. The soul's craving for peace is its natural yearning for its End, its Maker and its God. Through this longing for peace, God would, as by a magnet, draw it to Himself. But so long as it knows not, that its peace

[d] Lucret. de rer. nat. i. 111. [e] Col. iii. 5.

can only be found by cleaving stedfastly to God, by giving itself to Him and adhering inseparably to Him, it must take up with some of His creatures, instead of Himself. But *there* is the necessary void, that since the soul is large enough to contain the Infinite God, nothing less than Himself can satisfy or fill it.

It knows too from God's Word, that it was made to have God for its Friend, the Object of its being; that it owes Him a loyal obedience, the affections of its heart. If it is a Christian soul, it knows that its God took flesh, became Man, was born, suffered, died, rose again for love of *it;* died, as we say now, 'to destroy death, and rose again to restore to us everlasting life;' that He gave His Spirit to unite us as closely as He could to Himself. How can it know this and remain apart from God and not have an aching void, or be at peace?

Then, by a necessity of its nature, it must make itself a false peace, or at least a truce. It has no peace now, but it is confident that it will have it bye and bye. It cannot have peace and abide in its sins, but bye and bye it will part with its sins; or its sins, it hopes, will part with it; temptation will not, or is not to have such power as now. It matters not how. Somehow, without effort, without self-sacrifice, without victory, without repentance, without love, without devotion, cold as it is, and not even hoping to be kindled by the fire of God's love, it is, in some way, to turn to God, and all is to be right.

So it makes a truce with its creditors: they are not to be hard upon it, or exacting, but to give it time, and all is to be right.

Or it will strike a balance with itself, and set so much natural good against so much evil, of which it is dimly conscious, as the Pharisee did. It does not commit the sins, to which it is not, by natural temperament, inclined. It lives in lawful marriage, and is not (as the Pharisee said) an adulterer: it lives like Dives, at ease, and is not covetous; it is naturally straightforward, and so is not unjust; or it gives of its superfluities, and pays its rates exactly. And yet the Pharisee, amid his thanksgivings to God for his virtues as the gift of God, went to his house unjustified. He was in a false peace. There is perhaps no such fertile seed-plot of false peace, as men's natural graces or good dispositions. Men have them ever before their faces, and their sins behind their backs. They contemplate the graces which they think they have, and the sins which they think they have not, and leave out of sight the sins which they have, and the graces which they have not. They dare not indeed call natural love of activity zeal for God, or natural good nature, Divine love, such as that wherewith Christ has loved us. But activity for good or natural kindliness pass current with the world; why should they not with themselves and with their Judge?

And yet, if we look at God's word, how much of all this and more is false peace! True peace is that which lasts for ever. They who do their works to be seen of men (and in subtle ways very many more do so, than see that they are doing it), these are praised of men, if they be popular works; men think well of them; why should they not of them-

selves? But it is a false peace: for our Lord says, "[e] they have their reward," wholly, all which will come to them, and so they have none in store for them in heaven.

They who build wood, hay, stubble, even on the One Foundation which is Christ, although saved as by fire, in the mercy of God, still have a false peace: all their lives long they build with great labour, what shall be burned up in the great Day.

The foolish virgins had begun well; they went forth to meet the Bridegroom: they had been at pains to get themselves lamps: they had even lighted them once; they *had* had oil in them; they had waited for the Bridegroom; at last, while He tarried, they became tired of waiting: they did not persevere, but they were not disquieted: they slumbered: while they slumbered, their lamps were gone out. They had been in peace; but when the Bridegroom came, it was too late. They cried, "[f] Lord, Lord, open unto us;" but the door was shut, and there came forth from within that terrible voice, "Verily I say unto you, I know ye not." The door never opened.

All those who shall appeal to our Lord, "[g] Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works," yet have not been careful to do the will of the Father, will have had a false peace. For He says, "I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

The slothful servant had a false peace; for he

[e] S. Matt. vi. 2. [f] Ib. xxv. 11, 12. [g] Ib. vii. 22, 23.

came boldly to his Lord, and said, "[h] See; Thou hast, *that* is Thine." He had kept, as he thought, his Lord's talent safe, he paraded it; he made no doubt that he had done well with it. Perhaps he had misgivings at times, when he saw the zeal and diligence of others; yet any how he had stifled such misgivings. He had satisfied his conscience, up to the hour of death, when his Lord came to take account of his stewardship. As he had died, so he came boldly to the Presence of his Judge. He thought that he had done all that could be expected of him. Yet his talent was taken from him, and he himself was cast into outer darkness.

They who built their house upon the sand had a false peace; day by day they raised it; beautiful were its proportions; its materials were those great sayings of our Lord which they heard, admired, felt, perhaps thought well of themselves for feeling—but did not. Beautiful was it, till the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon it, and it fell. Our Lord seems to look upon it with sorrow, as He did on Jerusalem, when He wept over it. It had so much good; aspirations, sympathy, feelings, sense of good, but in vain; for it fell; and our Lord adds so mournfully, "[i] and great was the fall of it."

They had false peace, who, in the prophet's time, "[k] seek Me daily," God says, "and delight to know My ways,"—"they take delight in approaching to God;" who came to enquire of God, having set up their idols in their heart, and were the more deceived, because they so enquired: who, "[l] with their

[h] S. Matt. xxv. 25. [i] Ib. vii. 27.
[k] Isa. lviii. 2. [l] Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

mouth, shewed much love, but their heart went after their covetousness;" to whom that prophet, with his words of fire, was like "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument: for they heard his words, and did them not."

Or they, who for a time were willing to rejoice in the light of that "[m]burning and shining light," the strict preacher of repentance, S. John Baptist; or who heard the words of our Lord Himself with joy, and dured for a while, but bye and bye were offended: who were very attentive to hear our Lord, so that the Chief Priests, who sought to destroy Him, could not find what they might do[n], yet anon were stirred up to cry, "Crucify Him."

Nay it would seem as if all the lost will have had a false peace; for they profess their ignorance of ever having been hard-hearted to our Lord. They cry out with amazement, and again appeal to Himself against His sentence, "[o]When saw we Thee an hungred or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?" Yet it availed them not. "These," our Lord says, "[p]shall go away into everlasting punishment."

But since in the Great Day, so much peace will, too late, be found to be 'false,' how shall we, while there is time, distinguish the true from the false? These are *some* marks.

True peace is the gift of God, false peace is of man's own making. True peace is given by God amid the thought of God, obedience to God, the

[m] S. John v. 35. [n] S. Luke xix. 47, 48.
[o] S. Matt. xxv. 44. [p] Ib. 46.

continual knowledge of the Presence of God, the unceasing worship of God, the friendship of God. False peace is in the forgetfulness of God.

True peace is deepened, not disturbed, by all God's merciful checks, chastisements, the sorrows and disquietudes of the world. False peace eludes, escapes, forgets them, unless in God's mercy it is shivered by them.

True peace is in exact conformity to the will of God; nothing comes amiss, because all comes from the Good Father, sending all good, overruling all evil. "[q] Thou in very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled." False peace becomes discontented with every thing which is against its own will; murmurs, repines, replaces its griefs with fresh sources of grief.

True peace has no wants; all comes alike to it; it most fears unbroken prosperity (if there be such a thing in this world), lest it should have its portion in it: it pines only for its God. False peace has its home in prosperity; is anxious to increase or to keep it, frets after what it has not; is discontented with what it has; restless, covetous.

True peace is in humility, and amid a low estimate of itself. False peace is amid self-complacency. True peace, with S. Paul, is in forgetfulness of the things which are behind and stretching forth to the things which are before, pressing "[r] toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." False peace is continually looking back, hugging itself for any good it ever did or thinks that it did.

[q] Ps. cxix. 75. [r] Phil. iii. 14.

True peace is firm trust in the overwhelming Infinite love of Jesus for us, His poor sinners: false peace shrinks from the thought of Jesus, as in a personal relation to them. For that thought of a personal relation would bring with it the thought of His being their Example, Whose life they must copy; their Master, Whose commands they must set themselves to obey, not the one or other according to their liking, but all; their Judge, Whose heart-searching Eye is ever upon them, keeping account against the Day of account; and all these are very exacting relations, inconsistent with all the conditions of false peace.

But since true peace is the gift of God, can we in any way gain it, can we set ourselves in the way of having it? Surely. We can, by God's grace, dispose ourselves for receiving it from Him. The first essential condition, plainly, is to cut off any deadly sin, if we have unhappily admitted it. "There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked." God proclaimeth "[s] peace, peace to the far off and to the near, and I will heal him." But His holiness requires Him to add, "But the wicked are like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked." All man's passions are a trouble to him, until they are, by God's grace, subdued. For by reason of his better nature, he is at war with himself. 'I see what is best and approve it,' said a heathen sensualist[t], 'I follow what is worse.' Apart

[s] Isa. lvii. 19—21.

[t] Ovid Met. vii. 19. See other like complaints in Wetstein on Rom. vii. 15.

from the trouble, which God mercifully sprinkles over them, he must be distressed, because he is self-condemned. True peace is in union with God "[u] Your iniquities," God says, "have been abidingly separating between you and your God."

Therefore Scripture boldly bids you, "[x] Befriend yourself with God, and be at peace." Let Him be thy Companion, with Whom thou dost hold familiar intercourse, thy Friend. Accustom yourself to His Ways, His Thoughts; make His Ways your ways, His Thoughts your thoughts. Could you have better or wiser, than His, Who is Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Love? His law is the transcript of a portion of His eternal Mind. "[y] Great peace have they who love Thy law," said one who knew from experience, as well as from God's teaching, what he was saying. The ways of Divine Wisdom, said he who above all sons of men had tried human wisdom; whose name is, throughout the East, still a proverb for wisdom: "[z] Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Then, cherish thankfulness with prayer. S. Paul gives us in two words, this secret of peace: "[a] In everything (he excepts nothing, so do not you) by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving* let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding *shall* keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus:" he does not say it (as we have learned) as a benediction only: he tells us, it "*shall* keep your hearts and minds." Do the one and God will do the other. Ask what

[u] Isa. lix. 2. [x] Job xxii. 21.
[y] Ps. cxix. 165. [z] Prov. iii. 17. [a] Phil. iv. 6, 7.

you will, be thankful; and not peace only, but peace which passeth all which our poor minds can think, shall keep these poor breaking restless hearts, these ever wearying worrying minds of ours—in Christ Jesus.

For this is the sum of it. He was fore-announced as the Prince of Peace, and not of peace only, but of an ever-enlarging, ever-widening, deepening peace, without bound, without measure; "[b]of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." This the Angels came to announce at His Birth, "[c]Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." This was His mission to give us "[d]knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins, to give light to us who sat in darkness, and to guide our feet in the way of peace." This was His bequest, just on His way to purchase it for us, "[e]Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." This He gave on the day of His Resurrection: this He renewed to-day: "[f]Jesus came and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you." And now for these well-nigh eighteen centuries and a half, He has kept His word to each individual soul of man, all those millions of souls, one by one, in each successive generation of our race, which has trusted in Him. No one soul hath He ever failed: He will not fail *thee*. Would our poor hearts have more? Yes; there is more, I might say, infinitely more. For peace is no mere gift of God, without us; not even any created grace or rest within us. Our peace is, Christ Himself;

[b] Isa. ix. 7. [c] S. Luke ii. 14.
[d] Ib. i. 77. [e] S. John xiv. 27. [f] Ib. xx. 26.

"He," God says by S. Paul, "[g]He is our peace," indwelling us by His Spirit. For "[h] the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy (and) peace;" "[i] the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Peace, it may be, must be, imperfect here, because we are imperfect; yet peace on the way to be perfected in Him Who is perfect, yea Infinite Perfection. '[k] For our peace shall then be perfect, when, our whole nature cleaving inseparably to its Creator, nothing from us shall be at variance with us.'

O weary not yourselves any more (if you have been doing so) in seeking peace in the world, where it cannot be found: seek it where it *is*, where God has placed it, in Himself; and He has pledged His Truth to you, "ye shall find." "[l]In Me ye shall have peace;" in Him, in Whose "[m] Presence is the fulness of satisfying joy; at Whose Right Hand there are pleasures for evermore."

[g] Eph. ii. 14. [h] Gal. v. 22. [i] Rom. xiv. 17.

[k] S. Aug. de contin. n. 17. Opp. vi. 306. Short Treatises p. 257. Oxf. Tr.

[l] S. John xvi. 33. [m] Ps. xvi. 11.

SERMON XXXII[a].

FREE-WILL.

1 S. Peter ii. 16.

"*As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness but as the servants of God.*"

Liberty, freedom! The young heart bounds at the thought. It speaks of the unloosing of chains, of bursting of fetters, the breaking of a galling yoke, the opening of a prison, the free roaming of the unbarred uncaged soul, the full freedom of the will. Man was born, created to be free; freedom, full freedom is his original endowment, the condition of his nobility of soul, his distinction from the irrational creatures, the image of God in which he was created. As contrasted with necessity, it is as indestructible as in Almighty God Who created it. 'As God Himself abides freely good, by His own will, not from any external necessity; so Satan, as freely, fell into and persists in evil by his own free choice, not by any impulse from without.' 'As the consent of the human will, when by grace converted to good, renders man freely good and in good free, because it takes place with his will and is not

[a] Preached in the College-service, 3rd Sunday after Easter 1870.

dragged against it, so that consent, when, of its own accord, it sinks into ill, makes man equally a free agent in ill, since he is led thereto by his own will, and is not from without compelled to be bad.'

What then is the freedom which the prophets foretold, which Jesus said that He would give, the freedom of the Gospel, the glorious liberty of the sons of God? Christ freed us from the yoke of sin by the freedom of righteousness: He freed us from the dominion of concupiscence by the freedom of the Spirit and the dominion of love and grace.

Absolute freedom of choice is inseparable from a rational being. '[b]It had a beginning,' says S. Bernard, 'but has no setting: it is not increased by righteousness or glory; it suffers no loss from sin or misery: having impressed upon it a sort of substantive image of the eternal and unchangeable Divinity.'

But if perfect freedom is, to follow, unlet and unthwarted, with our free-choice self-impelled, the highest aims and tendencies and reason and perfections of our being,—which is free, he who from some unreasonable bias, rejects evident truth, or he who receives it? he who follows the order of the law within his heart, or he who thwarts and deposes it? he who subdues his bodily passions to himself or he who enslaves his soul to his passions? the servant of God or sin's slave? Human nature, in the persons of the sages of heathendom, gives the answer, '[c]It is impossible that *he* should be free,' said Pythagoras, 'who serves his passions and is mastered by his passions.'

[b] de grat. et lib arb c. 9. [c] in Stob. in Wetst. on S. John viii. 34.

'Tell me,' says Socrates[d] to a disciple, 'thinkest thou that freedom is a great and glorious possession alike to a man and a state?' 'Most exceedingly.' 'Whoso then is ruled by bodily pleasures and on account of them cannot do what is best, thinkest thou that he is free?' 'Not at all.' 'For to do what is best seemeth to them to be free; and so then, to have those who should hinder so doing to be unfree?' 'Certainly.' 'The incontinent seem then to you to be unfree?' 'Assuredly.' 'And they seem to you not only to be hindered from doing the best things, but to be constrained to do the foulest?' 'Both alike.' 'But what sort of masters deemest thou those to be, who hinder what is best, constrain to what is worst?' 'The worst.' 'And what slavery thinkest thou the worst?' 'That to the worst masters.' 'The incontinent then are enslaved to the worst slavery?' concludes Socrates. 'I think so.' You know how with one consent heathen philosophers said, 'The wise man alone is free.' 'He alone is indeed free,' says Philo[e], 'who taketh God Alone for his commander.' 'The good man alone is free; for the evil man, though he deny it, is the slave of as many lords as he has vices.' '[f]Lust cometh and saith, 'Thou art mine, for thou covetest the things of the body. In such or such a passion thou soldest thyself to me; I counted down the price for thee.' Avarice cometh and saith, 'Thou art mine, the gold and the silver which thou hast, is the price

[d] Memorab. iv. 5.

[e] Omnem probum esse liberum. Opp. p. 448. 17. Wetst.

[f] S. Ambr. in Ps. 118. Serm. 12. n. 39. abridged and, in one place, paraphrased. S. Ambrose could speak more plainly than we can.

of thy slavery.' Luxury cometh and saith, 'Thou art mine; amid the winecups I purchased thee; amid the feasts I gained thee.' Ambition cometh and saith to thee, 'Thou art surely mine. Knowest thou not, that to that end I gave thee command over others, that thou thyself mightest serve me? Knowest thou not, that to that end I bestowed power on thee, that I might bring thee under mine own?' All vices come, and one by one they chant, 'Thou art mine.' He whom so many claim, how vile a slave is he!'

There is a side of truth in that, which some modern deniers of their own free-will say, 'we act, each according to our antecedents; these determine our present wills, to find pleasure in things of this life, if such has been our past; to find pleasure in joys above this world in God, if in times past we have sought Him.' True, that by acts of evil choice the sinner weakens his power of right choice. For so has Jesus said, "[g]He that committeth sin is the servant of sin." This ye have felt, if any habit has gained power over you, that every act, every fall, every return to the sin weakens self-mastery. '[h]Evil desire,' says the Jewish proverb, 'is in the beginning like a spider's thread, and in the end like the ropes of a wain.' Thread by thread and sin by sin do they bind the sinner, so that none can burst the bonds, save He Who burst the bonds of death and hell, and bound the strong man and spoiled his goods. Yet, weakened or powerless as the better will may be, the remonstrating, silenced, cosened, voice within, the momentary hesitation, the remorse,

[g] S. John viii. 34. [h] in Kim. on Is. v. 18.

when the sin is past, the shame, attest that, even in enslaving itself, the will was yet free. It was free enough to condemn itself for the choice which it made, and to which when it had yielded, it condemned and despised itself, that it had so yielded.

From this slavery Christ came to set us free. "[1] If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." But then are we not still under a law? and, if we are under a law, how have we that freedom, which youth especially longs for? Is then lawlessness the only freedom? Men admire what is called 'the reign of law,' throughout the boundless realms of God's creation. So do they idolise the beauty of the conception, that they are jealous even of Almighty God Himself, and would not have Him, by any higher law of His love, suspend His usual modes of His operation. Law then is something beautiful. There must be something within us, which finds its rest and expression in that well-ordered harmony, which His abiding will impresses on His inanimate creation. Could we imagine (as they did of old) that the stars in their perpetual circle had volition, or were ensouled by inferior intelligences, could we think that they would start out of that imparted order, and, to assert their own free-will, disturb that sweet accord, which those of old imagined as the music of the spheres? Even in human things, what in sights and sounds so thrills through us, as when many voices or minds through obedience to a law become as one? What are all those deeds of united heroism, when all lay 'with their back to the field and their feet to the foe,'

[1] S. John viii. 36.

or that inscription 'To Lacedæmon tell, That here, obeying her behests, we fell,' but the wills of many, obeying, to the death, minds without them, whose will they reverenced?

And cannot Almighty God make us love a law, which is the transcript of His perfections, the law of love; a law which responds to the law of our better nature within; which brings our whole being into harmony with itself, with our fellow-beings and with Him. '[j] We are,' it has been boldly said, 'not under the law, which commandeth what is good, yet imparteth it not; but we are under grace, which, making us to love that which the law enjoineth, may command the free.' "[k] If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are no longer under the law;" not under the law which strikes terror, but does not impart love; which "[l] love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, not by the letter of the law, but by the Holy Spirit which is given to us." This is the law of liberty, not of servitude; because it is the law of love, not of fear. '[m] In right-doing there is therefore no bond of necessity, because there is the liberty of love.' '[n] Think not thou art drawn against thy will: by love also is the mind drawn.' If the poet might say, Trahit sua quemque voluptas, not necessity, but pleasure, not obligation, but delight; how much more ought we to say, that man is drawn to Christ, who is delighted with truth, delighted with bliss, delighted with righteousness, delighted with life eternal, all which is Christ. Have the bodily senses their plea-

[j] S. Aug. de contin. c. 3. [k] Gal. v. 18.
[l] Rom. v. 5. [m] S. Aug. de nat. et grat. c. 65.
[n] Id. in S. Joan. Evang. Tract; xxvi. n. 4.

sures, and is the soul bereft of its pleasures? If the mind have not its pleasures, what means it, "[o] they shall be abundantly satisfied with the richness of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the Fountain of life and in Thy light shall we see Light." '[p] If those who love on earth are drawn by loving, drawn by the bond of the heart, drawn by what, amid the delights and pleasures of this earth, is disclosed to those who love, seeing that is true, 'trahit sua quemque voluptas;' doth not Christ, revealed to the soul by the Father, draw? For what doth the soul more strongly desire than Truth? For what can the soul more hunger than for wisdom, righteousness, truth, eternity?'

My sons, if you can find any higher ideal than God, Who made you in His image and likeness; if you can find any law of your being without you, which responds better to the yearnings of your best and deepest nature within, than that law of love which He Is; if you can can find any more assured truth than Him Who is the Truth; if you have found any thing out of Him that could satisfy the inmost cravings of your soul; if you have discovered any thing out of Him, an eternity of which would satisfy you—but no, I will not so wrong you, as even to imagine it. But then be consistent. Having been made free by Christ from the law of sin and the slavery to your lower nature, abide, by His grace, in the freedom which He has given you. Seek progress, but where progress can have no term, in the knowledge of the Infinite: seek freedom, but

[o] Ps. xxxvi. 9. [p] S. Aug. ib.

in Him to Whose Nature the choice of evil is a contradiction; seek truth, but in Him, Who is the Fountain-head and Source of all truth; measure not His reason by yours, but correct any imperfections of your unreason by *His* reason which is the Archetype of yours. So will He, by His grace, disenthral you from all which fetters the will, clouds the reason, perverts the understanding. He will lead thee, in Whom abide, fixed for ever, the first causes of all things unabiding, and of all things changeable the springs unchangeable, and the eternal reasons of all things unreasonable and temporal, until He see thee fit for that yet more glorious and perfect liberty, when this corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and we shall, face to Face, behold God, and in Him shall see all things, for we shall see Him as He IS.

SERMON XXXIII.

THE LOVE OF GOD FOR US.[a]

1 S. John iv. 19.

"*We love Him, because He first loved us.*"

Why does God love us? Alas, such as we are, we may well ask, Why? The Church does not bid us lie to God, when it puts into our mouths, twice every day, the confession, that we have gone astray from His ways like lost sheep; gone astray from the only good and right ways; what our better selves, our consciences, know to be right and good; even what those who know not God, unless seared by sin, know to be alone right and good, and we ourselves too, as soon as the temptation is over and the sin committed; and that, like that poor stupid bewildered animal which, if left to itself, always gets astray, whenever it can, and, if lost, cannot (they say) find its way back again. Nay more, the Church makes us accuse ourselves of having gone our own way, as the Prophet Isaiah confesses of the world, on whom the light and love of Christ had not yet shone. And then we confess that we have just reversed what we ought to have done; we have done what we ought

[a] Preached at a College-Service, Eastertide, 1876.

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not, and not done what we ought. And all this, although God is our Father, and has ever shewed us a Father's love; never wearying of shewing His love, never wearied by our perverseness and ingratitude and contempt and forgetfulness of Him.

And yet, since we treat Him thus, it is something at least to own, that we do so treat Him, if so be we may be shocked at last, that we have so treated Him.

But why then does God love us? It may be the beginning of some comfort to us, that He does not love us for anything in us. Nor for any foreseen merits of ours, nor for any complacency which He can have in any thing which He has made us or given us. Were this the source of His love, we might well think that it would long ago have been exhausted, since, blind as we are to our sins and imperfections, we must, at least, see our demerits to be greater than any merits which we could fancy to be in us. Nay the very good of nature or of grace, which we may picture to be in ourselves, has mostly turned against us, because we have been elated by it, and so have robbed Him, the good Giver. But what Seraph could we conceive imagining himself the adequate object of that boundless unimaginable overpowering vehemence of Divine Love? The Seraph, with his burning love, must know he is that fiery spirit of love, because God imparted to him that amazing exstasy of love, because He made it his being to be, ever to go forth out of himself in the fire of adoring love. He too loves God, because God first loved him, and drew him out of nothingness and non-existence, that he might so love Him.

If God loved us, because we first loved Him—one must not say it of God, but what a poor meagre uncontenting thing a love would be, which was only measured to us according to our deserts or because we deserved it! One could not conceive it of any deep human love. Human love amazes us, because it is so much beyond what we can imagine that we could deserve. It is the mystery of such pure love, that it can love, so beyond anything which it *sees* in what it loves. It often invests the object of its love with loveliness which it has not. It is a gift of God from soul to soul.

True, that we can contain more of the love of God, the more we become like Him. But He loves us, not because we are like Him, but to make us like Him. Out of what unlikeness to Him has He drawn most of us, that we may be like Him.

Theology has boldly said, that God did not love even that All-perfect Soul of our Divine Lord, out of any foreknowledge of those Divine perfections. He loved that Soul which He willed so to create, that It should never exist for a moment apart from His Godhead wherewith He united It, and so, in His love to It and to us, He created It while taking It, and took It while creating It.

Why then does God love us? Because "God is Love." He is All-Wise, but He is not said to be Wisdom; nor Might, although He is Almighty; nor Justice, although He is All-just; nor Holiness, although All-Holy. Nay, He might be said to be Very-Wisdom, Very-Might, Very-Light, Very-Truth, Very-Righteousness, Very-Life, Very-Reason, because all these and all besides which could be named,

exist originally in Him Alone, in The Father Underived, in the Son in-existing, because the Essence of the Father exists in Him, and in the Holy Ghost, as from Both proceeding, and by Nature having all which Either has, being Perfectly One with Them.

But Love communicates Itself. Love ever imparts Itself within the Coequal Coeternal Trinity. Scripture says of God the Son, that He was Begotten before all worlds, i. e. that there never was conceivable time, when He derived not His existence from the Father. But it is the mode of His existence. Coeternal Love ever unchangeably communicating Itself to the Son in that way which God in Holy Scripture calls generation, and the Love of Both, being absolutely One, breathing forth, as One Source, eternally, the Holy Spirit. So God ever existed, when time was not, One in Substance, yet in Persons distinct, ever acting within Himself, ever Blessed in reciprocal Love.

What a wonderful stillness of Love! Nothing imperfect, nothing limited, nothing changing, nothing incomplete, no exercise for all those attributes of God, which are shewn towards creatures. God *was* all which He *is;* All-holy, All-Good, All-just, Almighty: yet all these Attributes lay in the Mind of God, unexercised, because God had as yet created no being, toward whom to exercise them: nothing existed save in that unchanging, Infinite, simple, unimaginable Love. What an idea it gives one of love, that, when time existed not, there existed nothing but All-perfect Love, in unceasing living motion, yet unvarying rest. For God ever liveth and Is Love.

Science has disclosed to us periods of enormous magnitude, wherein to contemplate the terrific grandeur of the creations of our God. It hints to us the wondrous order of successive evolutions, and fills for us a space beyond our capacities to grasp. Yet boundless as it is to our imaginations, since Scripture tells us that creation was not coeternal with God, there was, when time was not, that undisturbed unchanging reign of Divine Infinite Love.

Yet known "unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." There can be nothing new in God. He changes all, being Himself Unchangeable. What He does or has done, *that* He ever willed to do. All His creatures, then, lay ever in the bosom of God, as what should be, even though countless ages should pass, before the fitting time should come, when they should be. All which has been, since He placed man upon the earth, all which shall be unto the end, all which He should do for man, or which man should do beside or against or by His love, was present in that waveless mirror of His Divine Mind; and that, in love. His certain knowledge hindered not our free-will. *There* lay the different orders of the heavenly beings, the Seraphim with their burning love, the Cherubim with their God-given knowledge, and all the rest of the heavenly host; each being ever, what God willed him to be, each reflecting some ray of His Infinite Perfection.

Yet not they only, but we, the last and lowest of His rational creation; we, free by His grace to choose Himself, but choosing something which was not He, instead of Him; we, whose first pattern, too faithfully copied, would be our first parent's fall, were

there. For us He willed in all eternity to become Man; for us He, the Eternal, willed by taking our Manhood to acquire a capacity of dying; He, the Impassible, of suffering; He, ever the Self-same, to have a beginning of Being. Satan, one of the highest of the Heavenly beings, is thought to have had this preference of our poor nature to himself exhibited to him, and rebelled and became the apostate spirit, which he has remained. For us God the Holy Ghost ever willed to be the immediate Author of the Incarnation, and yet to give to God the Son a nearness to us which He Himself had not. And yet He too willed to have a special office to our restoration. His Mission, in all eternity, lay in His Divine Mind: nay, it lay in the relation of the Divine Persons, that God the Son should be Incarnate, God the Holy Ghost should be sent. He willed to be exposed to a more manifold personal contumely than God the Son made Man. God, made Man, was, for those three years and a half, waylaid, mocked, blasphemed, rejected, despised, hated: at the last, to be rid of Him, they crucified Him. Out of sight, they blaspheme Him still. *They* are His own, who still receive Him not; His own, who still will not have Him to reign over them; His own, who turn away from His love: His own, purchased by His Blood, redeemed by His sufferings, who trample under foot the Blood of the Covenant whereby they were sealed; who will not be His disciples or follow Him: who prefer to Him every passing pleasure, every thing unseemly, all degrading to themselves.

But God the Holy Ghost knew that He too should have His special contumely, and willingly

undertook it for love of us. Of all those millions of souls in all the years since the Fall, there has not been one soul of man whom He has not visited by His grace. Of those who know Him not, there has not been one, by whom, in every act of wilful sin, He has not been unconsciously rejected. How much worse the conscious contumely which He has endured from all of us Christians, who know that from Him immediately comes every suggestion to avoid, or keep from, or forsake sin; 'all holy desires, all good thoughts, all just works;' and yet have at any time stopped our ears against His whispers, or turned away to any vanity or worse, upon which we had set our hearts, or to which we had enslaved ourselves. "[b] My Spirit shall not always strive with man," was God's sentence when "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth," "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all day long," and God had seen Noah alone righteous before Him in his generation. And is not God the Holy Ghost sensible of all this contumely and ingratitude? Holy Scripture speaks of God after the manner of men, because so only could we understand it. We know that God, in His infinite fathomless Beatitude, is not liable to suffering like us. And yet something there must be in God, analogous to our human suffering, something which is pictured by it, some shrinking back of His Divine love into itself, some check to that delight which He has in communicating Himself to the creatures which He has made for His love; that God says of His former people, in contrast to His tender treatment of them, "[c] they rebelled and

[b] Gen. vi. 3, 12, 5. [c] Is. lxiii. 10.

grieved His Holy Spirit." And *us*, to whom He has given His Spirit, not only to solicit us from without, but to dwell in us, He prays "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption." This alas! we have done oftentimes, whenever we have refused to listen to His loving suggestions. And yet He loves us!

Yet not only all the stupendous dispensations of God in the work of our Redemption lay in the mind of God, before creation was, but each one of the redeemed. Omniscience must know all things. There can be nothing little or great to Infinity. In the absolute simplicity of His being, each single being or thing, which He has created, or shall create, or things countless which He could create, although He never shall create them, lay in His unchanging unvarying sight. He tells it us of the greatest and the least of animate or inanimate things. "[d] God made every plant of the field, before it was in the earth." "[e] I caused it to rain upon one city and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not, withered." "[f] Every beast of the forest," He says," is Mine, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills." "[g] Not a sparrow shall fall on the ground without your Father." He, Who "[h] bringeth forth herb for the cattle," "[i] telleth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their name:" He "[k] bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by name by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth."

[d] Gen. ii. 5. [e] Amos iv. 7. [f] Ps. l. 10.
[g] S. Matt. x. 20. [h] Ps. civ. 14. [i] Ib. cxlvii. 4. [k] Is. xl. 26.

"Ye are of more value," our Blessed Lord says, "than many sparrows;" nay one might boldly say, than sun moon and stars or all those countless worlds which science has disclosed to us. For sun moon and stars are upheld in being, momentarily by His care: their beautiful, unensouled being cannot be the object of His love. *Us* He ever loved!

Why, in His Infinite Wisdom, He did not create co-eternally with His own existence; why (so to speak) He restrained Himself within His own Infinity, and, in that changeless Being, communicated Himself within Himself only, and not to beings who were not He, we shall not know until He reveal it to those who shall see Him as He Is. It belongs to His love to communicate Himself out of Himself; to form creatures, to whom He can communicate Himself. His love of us was part of Himself.

Since then there can be no change, nothing new in the Mind of God, no division in His simple Being, so that He should behold one thing and not another; there we lay, each one of us, whatever we are or have been, the objects of His Love. He saw each one of us, just as He should create us, at that moment of time, under all those circumstances, so balanced with all those endowments of mind and body which should be best for each, the individual object of His love. But each one He made, to communicate Himself and His love to each, to be Himself the End of our being and its perfection; Himself the only adequate repose and joy of our souls; Himself the unceasing, overflowing, transporting contentment of our being, our God and our All: Himself to be united with us, and we with Him: to have

each one of us, our own place in His Eternal Being, where we may evermore gaze on and be satisfied with His Infinite Beauty, and be transported with and penetrated with His Love, and for ever thrill with the beatitude of the Beatific Vision.

And shall we not then love Him, Who has so eternally loved us, Who loved us so individually, so indivisibly, as if there were no other to love, as if there were no Seraphim with their burning love; Who became one of us, and so died for us, as He did not for the Angels, and took a closeness to us, which the Angels could not have, Himself the Centre of our bliss; Who gave us the bliss of all besides who shall admit His love, to be a portion and accession to our bliss, because He, Who shall have admitted us to love Him, so loves them, and we shall see in them Himself and His love, and shall love them in Him and Him in them. Shall envy have more power than love? Shall envy change that once exalted angel, 'the perfection of beauty,' into a devil, and shall love not transport us, who are made to be like unto the Angels, with all earnestness to fulfil our destination?

How shall we love God? How shall we *not* love Him? God, Who is Love, Alone can teach us, how He has loved us; He Alone can pour forth His love into our hearts, whereby we may love Him through His Spirit which He hath given us; and He will give it us, if we ask Him. We should not refuse a child who cried. "[1] Much more will your heavenly Father," Jesus says, "give the Holy Spirit to them who ask Him." All creatures have a voice to bid us

[1] S. Luke xi. 13.

love Him. They tell us by their beauty; 'If we are so beautiful, how much more He Who made us.' They tell us by their manifold uses; 'Love Him Who made us for thee, Who, through us, daily loadeth thee with His benefits.' Thine own being has a voice within thee, to bid us love Him, Who gave us such a capacity of love. 'Os homini sublime dedit,' that we might gaze aloft to Him. The heavens above us bid us love Him. For thither, as almost now, we may see our ascending Lord gone up on high to prepare a place for us, yea that special place around the Eternal Throne, which in all eternity He purposed for thee, which by His precious Blood He purchased for thee, where He, Who died for thee, longeth to receive thee into His own joy.

Jesus stretcheth out His glorious scarred Hands unto thee; He Himself calleth unto thee, 'I have withheld nothing from thee; withhold not thyself, the price of My Blood, from Me. Come unto Me, that where I am, there may My servant be, in My joy.'

In every choice which thou hast to make between good and evil, God the Holy Ghost whispereth in thy secret heart, (sometimes in some very grave choice almost audibly,) 'Choose not that, lest thou die; choose this, and live; grieve not Me, Who am given to thee, of Comforters the Best, to guide thee by My counsel, that thou too mayest be received into glory.' Even at this moment, if thou hast some misgivings, if thou art thinking, 'I ought to be living nearer to God; I ought to love more Him Who has so loved me;' He, thy Teacher, is within thee.

O shall we not now say to Him, 'Lord, too late have I loved Thee, that ever I loved Thee not; too little have I loved Thee, Who art infinitely to be loved, Who dost love me with all that Infinite love. Draw me, that I may follow Thee: Thou art my God, and I will thank Thee: Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee. I will love Thee, O God my Strength: be Thou the Strength of my heart and my Portion for ever.'

SERMON XXXIV.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, THE SOURCE, EARNEST, PATTERN OF OURS.*

Rom. iv. 25.

"*Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*"

'DIED for our sins!' This blessed truth we all own as the centre of our faith, the life of our life, the groundwork of our hopes, our restingplace amid the memories of past sin or the consciousness of our remaining infirmities, of the hatefulness of all sin and the incompatibility of sin with the joy of the sight of God. This we all own. May He deepen the thought in us! But then what could be lacking yet? The infinite Price was paid; the priceless Atonement was completed. He Himself, our Redeemer, had said, "It is finished." The Holy One had died; the guilty were redeemed. That one all-sufficient meritorious Sacrifice for sin had been made, to whose value and merit our Redeemer Himself could add no more. How then does the Apostle say, "and was raised again for our justification?" He had died for the sins of the whole world, past,

* Preached at a College-Service, 2nd Sunday after Easter, 1871.

present, in all time to the end. He had had us all in His sacred Adorable Heart. He died for each one of us; for those who died before He came; for those who, while on earth, should never know Him or of Him; for those who crucified Him; for those of us, who should crucify Him again by our sins; for those, who should reject Him unto the end. What lacked there then yet? In itself, nothing; for us, every thing.

Complete in themselves were the virtue and power of that all-meritorious Death. The might of His life had to be communicated to us. He Himself was the Head and new Beginning of our race. But man was as yet separate from Him. Had He remained in the grave, had He ascended from the tomb to His glories in the heaven, He would have merited our forgiveness: He would not have imparted to us His Risen Life. The Sacrifice on the Cross perfected our Redemption in regard to God: there was yet a further act to complete it toward us, and in us. He was delivered for our offences," and so completed the Atonement: "He was raised again for our justification," to communicate its fruits to us. The Resurrection of Jesus is something to us, even beyond the Cross. "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" [a] "It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again." As He died for us, so He rose again for us; to open to us the way to our resurrection and heavenly bliss, and, after the Resurrection, to ascend into Heaven, and there, enthroned at the Right Hand of the Father, "to make intercession for us."

[a] Rom. viii. 34.

'It had not been enough,' says our Homily[b], 'to be delivered by His Death, except by His Resurrection we had been endowed with righteousness. He paid the ransom of sin, that it should not be laid to our charge. He died to destroy the rule of the devil in us; and He rose again to send down His Holy Spirit to rule in our hearts, to endow us with perfect righteousnesss.'

And this He did by His own personal relation to each one of us. "I," He saith, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." He has not only obtained, purchased, wills, bestows, is the meritorious cause of, our resurrection. He Himself *is* it. He gives it not to us, as it were from without, as a possession, as something of our own. He Himself *is* it to us. He took our flesh, that He might vivify it; He dwelt in it and obeyed in it, that He might sanctify it: He raised it from death by His quickening Spirit, that He might give it immortality. "The first Adam was a living soul;" and that life being lost by sin, "the last Adam became a quickening Spirit." And we, in his Church, being incorporated into Him, being made members of His Body, flesh of His Flesh and bone of His Bones, through His Sacrament, partake of Him. We are made members of Him; He dwelleth in us and is our Life. "Because I live," He saith, "ye shall live also."

"He rose again for our justification." As then He died for us, so He rose again for us. He did not rise again for us, in the same sense as He died for us. For all the merit which He gained for us was during His suffering Life on earth. He died in our

[b] On the Resurrection.

stead, that we might not die: He rose, not, in our stead, but as the First-fruits of them that slept, the Source, the Earnest, the Pattern of our Resurrection.

It is the Source, because He is the Head; we, His members. His Human Nature was destined to that ineffable exaltation at the Right Hand of God; but He willed not to place It directly there. For our sakes He willed to linger here for those forty days (in the midst of which we now are,) to assure us of His own Resurrection and of our's in it; to exhibit to us some likeness of it, to institute that Sacrament whereby, one by one, He engrafts us into Himself. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that all we, who have been baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into His Death. Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into Death . . . If we have been planted together in the likeness of His Death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection." Christ willeth not to be without His members. Not for Himself alone did He enter into the dwelling-place of His glory; but, when He had overcome the sharpness of death, to open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers. He knit us into Himself, that He might raise us with Himself. We have already in us the source and principle of life. "Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood," He saith, "*hath* eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me shall live by Me." 'Since the Flesh of the Saviour became life-giving,' says S. Cyril [c], 'as being united to That which is by

[c] on S. John vi. 54. p. 530 ed. P. Pusey; p. 418. Oxf. Tr; quoted 'Real Presence,' p. 631.

Nature Life, the Word from God, then, when we taste It, we have in ourselves life, we too being united to It, as It to the indwelling Word.' So truly is the Resurrection of Christ the cause and earnest of our's, that S. Paul boldly says, "If the dead rise not, neither is Christ risen."

And not only is It the earnest of our resurrection. It is its Pattern. Behold His Body, transparent with light; arrayed in eternal glory; material still, yet not bounded by our earthly laws; moving as It wills, unhindered by any material obstacles; material at once and spiritual, all-radiant with the glory of the Indwelling, Hypostatically-united Godhead,—such is, as far as is possible for mere creatures, the pattern of our's. It is the express teaching of God's word, "[d] Our citizenship subsisteth in the heavens, whence also we wait for our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, Who also shall transform the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the Body of His Glory, according to the working of His Power, to subdue all things unto Himself." Observe the exceeding greatness of the words, He shall "transform," "refashion" it from what it is; "He shall make it of like form with" that which, although created, is above all other created things, "the Body of His Glory;" in which His Glory is enshrined, and that, by the working of His own Omnipotence; and not so only, but *that* Omnipotence, as put forth to the uttermost, "to subdue all things to Himself."

And so in those words which are our consolation over our beloved departed, "[e] As we have borne the

[d] Phil. iii. 20, 21. [e] 1 Cor. xv. 49.

image of the earthy (of Adam,) we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," Christ. "Such as is the Heavenly, such also are the heavenly." It is too real a likeness which we bear to the earthy, spiritual and corporeal; decay, death, corruption, sinfulness. As real and exact shall be the likeness to the Heavenly. We have no stronger word to express all which is not identity, than "the image of." And such shall be the conformity of our risen bodies to Christ our Head, if, at His Coming, we are His.

If we are His! For if such is the beginning and such the end; the Beginning, Christ the First-fruits, arrayed for us in that unspeakable glory, which, when His beloved disciple, he who had lain on His Bosom, beheld, as far as man, God-enabled, can behold it here, fell down as one dead: the End, the complete transformation and conformation of our corruptible, passible, decaying, bodies to that residence of the Glory of God, our Lord's Divine, life-replete, life-giving Body—what, my sons, should what intervenes, the pathway to that end, be?

"[f]Christ," it was sung a little while ago, and our hearts thrilled with the triumphant joy of our Easter-hymn, "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God *in* Jesus Christ our Lord;" alive, by an intimate union with Jesus, whereby "He dwelleth in us and we in Him." "Christ

[f] Rom. vii. 9—11.

died unto sin" once! Once, sin came in contact with His All-holiness. At the beginning of His Passion, the horrible weight of our sins, pressing, like a mountain-load, upon Him, had expressed, in His Agony, those drops of Blood. They had been that Cup of Suffering, which called forth that meek prayer, "[g] Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou." At the close of that Passion, the heavy cloud of our sins, which He bore for us, hid His Father's Face and drew out that mysterious cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" That Sacrifice ended, there was no more sin to bear; sin could not, even from without, approach unto Him. "He liveth unto God." "*Thus*[h]," the Apostle says, (upon *this* pattern, *this* likeness, in the same manner as Christ, because ye are Christ's)—not half and half, but "*thus*," as Christ liveth, "do ye also account yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus;" by virtue of your union with Him, because ye dwell *in* Him and He *in* you. As we have part in His Resurrection, our's must be to pass from sin to grace, from vice to virtue, from self-love to the love of God, "that like as Christ also was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life." Sin will still struggle with us, but it must be as a rebel slave, not as our master and lord. Sin will still dispute our way, but He Who hath overcome it for us, will overcome it in us: we have, if we will, a charmed life; the poison fangs of the serpent have been broken; its wound, fretting and miserable though it be, need be

[g] S. Matt. xxvi. 39. [h] οὕτως, Rom. vi. 11.

no longer deadly: it lifts up against us a scotched powerless form, ready to sink down again, if it is struck at, with God's might, resolutely. Does this too seem hard, my sons? Hard it might seem, but that the slavery of sin is harder than the sweet service of Christ. Hard it seems, but to those only, who have not known how sweet and loving a Master is Christ. Hard might it be to forego what is against God's law, but for the superhuman peace and love, which they have who love that law. But is it then hard not to be ungrateful to Him Who loved us with that infinite love? Is it hard not to drive Him from us, when He of His mercy is come to us to dwell in us, as our Guest? Is it hard to keep from that horrible ingratitude, and have within us the foretaste of everlasting rest and peace? Say to yourself, at the next strong temptation, 'Shall I, for this, forego the love of Him Who hath so loved me? Shall I part with my own God? Shall I make like or below the beasts which perish, this body which He hath made to partake of His unspeakable glory?' And He Who giveth thee the beginning will lead thee unto the end. He, the Beginning and the End, will lead thee to that unending end, the joy which human heart cannot conceive, the Divine joy of Him, Who lived and died and rose again for thee, the joy of thine own Lord.

SERMON XXXV.

GOD'S CONDESCENDING LOVE IN RESTORING MAN BY HIS OWN INDWELLING*.

1 Cor. iii. 16.

"*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*"

All our other great Festivals are Festivals of our Lord; this is in a manner our own. All other Festivals tell us of what God wrought *for* us; the Day of Pentecost speaks to us of God's great work *in* us, His humbling Himself to each one of us.

By the Fall, every power of our soul, every office of our body was deranged. A fever ran through our whole frame. All our powers had, as it were, a fever-strength. We had a fiery might of body; fierceness of will, wildness of imagination, lawlessness of passion, keenness of intellect; but all—unbridled, unsubdued, uncontrollable, except for evil. Unregenerate man had, to a certain point, power over himself. A mightier passion had strength to subdue the weaker. Every passion had power over him by turns, and each could subdue every thing but itself. "[a] The children of this world are in their

* Preached on Whitsunday.

[a] S. Luke xvi. 8.

generation wiser than the children of light." At times, two passions would combine together to lord it over the soul. He would obey the weaker, if it would serve the stronger. He would be covetous of another's, in order to be profuse of it, when made his own[b]. Vanity would serve to lust, or lust to avarice, or even subject avarice again to vanity. All would master the soul by turns, and it mattered little to the evil master of the unhappy soul, by which he held it bound. More hideous was this blending of opposite vices; more piteous was it, when what might have been a virtue ministered to sin. Heathenism's stern virtues shame Christian listlessness and sloth. What would not, what will not, men endure for a corruptible crown? What patience will men use, what hardness with themselves, what working early and late taking rest, what abstemiousness, what toil, what bodily suffering, "[c]in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," if they can thereby but gratify some master-passion! Mighty sin demands of its slaves more than mighty virtue. Let God, not self, be the object, and the sinner's toils, wasted now in rearing a Babel-tower toward the heaven from which he shuts out himself, would be the labour of the saint, whom Christ would make partner, He says, of His own throne.

Such, before the day of Pentecost, was the maniac power of man. Such, when he stoops not to submit himself to the lowliness of Christ, are often his

[b] Alieni avidus, sui profusus. Sallust, of Catiline.

[c] 2 Cor. xi. 27.

powers now. He can direct, guide, control, subdue all things, except himself. Nature, and elements of nature serve him; art obeys his will; space seems to disappear before him; he can whirl with dazzling speed; his ears are in the ends of the earth, a continent lying between is no hindrance to him; earth, sea, and air in a measure obeyed him whom God has created in His own image and likeness, and set him over the works of His hands; one thing only was beyond his mastery; one thing roamed over sea and land, unsubdued to him and unsubduable; a mighty wreck, drifting hither and thither on the tide of time; powerful to evil, to good powerless; mighty to waste, to destroy, to blast, to corrupt, but mightless to restore what he had spoiled,—himself.

Such was man, before Christ came; such is man now, if he is still his mere natural self, or if, having lost grace, he have sunk back into a worse self than he was before. Such was the formless shapeless void, over which God the Holy Ghost again brooded, again brought man's wild chaotic powers into harmony and peace and stillness, whereon He Himself might again rest with fostering love, wherein He again might dwell.

One mightier than man had dwelt in man, fevered his passions, depraved his imagination, disordered his reason, filled his memory with hateful things. But now, One stronger than the strong man came to set him free. Enough it had been, and more than enough for us, had He, as in the days of His Flesh, commanded the unclean spirits to depart from us. Enough for us; but not enough for His Love. He took our Flesh, that God the Holy Ghost might again

have a fit abode, wherein to dwell. And from Himself He gave anew that His Great Gift to man. "[d] He gave," not "gifts" only to man, yea to "rebellious" man, but a Gift also, the Fountain of all gifts; Him, the Fire of love, Grace, Peace, Rest, the Remission of sins, the Perfection of holiness, the Earnest of life eternal, not as something *without* us, but within us, "that the Lord God might dwell in us." The Father and the Son willed that, through Him Who is the Communion of Both, the Bond of Both, we should have our Communion with Them and with one another. It was too little for His Love to give us all things without Himself. His Love willed rather to give Himself, and with Himself and in Himself to give us all things. Seemeth it a strange startling thing, that Almighty God should unite Himself with us, His poor creatures? Stranger were it, now that He has so told us, that He, the Fountain of Love, He, Whose very Nature is to communicate Himself, should make creatures to whom He *could* communicate Himself, and restrain Himself from us; stranger yet were it, that He should make us such that He could unite us to Him, and not unite us to Himself in love as closely as we are capable of.

Or is it strange again, that He should dwell in man, and yet so little outward change appear; that we should have so mysterious a being, that we should have God Himself within us, while yet, to all outward sight, we are but flesh and blood? But what mortal eye can see God's viewless Nature? "[e] In Him we live and move and have our being."

[d] Ps. lxviii. 18. [e] Acts xvii. 28.

We are in the midst of Him. He encompasseth us. Wherever we are, He Is; wherever we move, He is already there, for He is always every where unchangeably; and yet Job saith, "[f] I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him." He is present every where, where there is being; for all being is upheld by His Presence, though He is felt only by His Grace or in His Displeasure. His Essence cannot be beheld by created eyes, save when He Himself gives a power beyond nature to behold Him.

God wills to indwell us, in order to reform our whole selves. He willed to re-create us, when fallen from Him, by that inmost closest way of acting upon us, Himself within us. He willeth, not only to reform our wills, to enlighten our minds, to cleanse our imaginings, to uplift our trailing thoughts, to raise us to the skies, to strengthen us to good, to make us unconquerable by evil; but He willeth to do all this, Himself in us. "[g] It is not," our Blessed Lord says, "ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you." If we speak wise, good, holy, loving words, it is not we who speak them; it is not merely through His grace, that we speak them: His grace is Himself. It is by His Spirit within us, suggesting, giving the words, that we speak: it is our Father's Spirit Who speaketh in us. So also whatever we know aright of God in our hearts and our affections, we know "by His

[f] Job xxiii. 8, 9. [g] S. Matt. x. 20.

Spirit." "[h] For the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "But we," the Apostle adds, "have received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things freely given us of God." So, what we see to be good, through the Spirit of God we see it to be good. God is the Light of our eyes, that we may see it. When we do what is good, God, we know, worketh in us "to will and to do of His good pleasure." Thus then God Himself willed to be the Life of our life, the Soul of our souls, the Mind of our minds. He is Himself more inward to us than our inmost selves. He, within us, is the secret Spring of what to us seems inmost; the hidden Fountain, which gushes forth into any good. He, Uncreated Love, pours out into our souls all our power of divine love for Him and for each other. He, Uncreated Wisdom, orders our thoughts secretly, when they rise above ourselves and perceive ought of Him or His Truth, and stretch forth towards Him, as the fire darteth forth out of itself upwards towards that which it cannot reach. He, Uncreated Truth, dissipates from our mind, by His clear piercing ray, the mist which we have gathered round ourselves. He, Uncreated Strength, instrengthens us to bear or to overcome all evil, and to will mightily all good. He, Uncreated Holiness, Himself cleanses by His Presence an habitation for Himself and hallows by His Abiding the dwelling-place, which He has repaired, that He might enter in; which He has enlarged, that it might contain Him. He Himself, within us, informs our memory that we may remember Him, enlightens our minds that we may

[h] 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12.

know Him, moves our wills that we may choose Him and obey Him. He Himself, within us, quickens our diligence that we may seek Him, gives us wisdom that we may find Him, perseverance that we may attain unto Him.

Nor is it our spiritual nature only, which He so hallows. It is not only what we think the highest, purest part of us, that of which men are sometimes tempted to think proudly, their mind, their understanding, their memory, their intellectual faculties, in which God dwells. When He took flesh, He willed to be born in a manger, between brute creatures, the ox and the ass. When the beloved disciple who saw the heavens open, and that the Word was eternally God and with God, would speak of our Lord's Incarnation, He spoke of our human nature as that which is the lowest in us, "[i] the Word became flesh." So of us God says, not (though that is true) that He dwells in our souls, or spirits; but He speaks again of that lowest part in us, "[j] Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost." Yes, these poor bodies, which hunger and thirst, are heavy and weary; which shall return to corruption, which shall be subject to the dishonour of the grave, which shall "[k] say to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister,"—these God has chosen to be His dwelling-place; in them He is pleased to dwell; these He hallows; within these He is forming that glorious body which shall be after the Resurrection; with these He unites Himself now, that they may be full of His Glory hereafter. They shall shine above

[i] S. John i. 14. [j] 1 Cor. vi. 19. [k] Job xvii. 14.

the glory of the sun, because they shall be filled with the Light of His Divinity. They shall know no decay; for He shall be their Immortality. They shall know no weariness; for He shall be their Life. They shall know no suffering; for they shall be made Impassible, since He is not subject to suffering. They shall obey, unhindering, every motion of His will, for they shall be spiritual through His Indwelling Spirit.

How then should we reverence this our mysterious being. How should we wonder at ourselves, be jealous over ourselves, guard ourselves diligently for Him, since He has so loved us, as to do such honour even to the dust of the earth, which He framed to be our soul's dwelling place! How should we reverently use the eyes; how keep them from all wrong use and all unlawful sight, which are, through the Light of God, to see God! How should we keep the tongue from evil words, which, moved by the Spirit of God, is endlessly to sing the new song! How should we guard the heart from evil affections, which God has claimed as His own, and bidden us to give it wholly to Him; the soul which is capacious enough to 'contain God,' yet not large enough to contain the world *and* God!

[1] And those too, to human sight lost, degraded, outcasts; first destroyed, and then destroyers; first corrupted, and then corrupters; those hapless wrecks, betrayed to their destruction, because they once chose vanity or easiness, or misplaced affection rather than the plain will and command of God;—they too were once the temples of God. Once God

[1] Preached, when there was a collection for a Penitentiary.

dwelt in them; once they were His children, heirs, our fellow-heirs, of the bliss of His Presence in Heaven. And now, forsaken they seem of God and man. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, as you have, they had once. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, now own them not; perhaps they dare not own them, for fear of injury to those who remain. Or orphans they were, with no mother's care, (orphans they not unseldom are [m], even of those born as we,) who for want or homelessness or friendlessness broke the law of God; and man, who makes light of other breaches of God's law, who forgives himself any breaches of the law of God, fulfils in them the righteous judgement of God, and, as it were, outlaws them. A short-lived generation, decaying before they have lived half their years; sinking into the grave; weighed down untimely by the sins whose guilt they share, but whose weight they alone bear; dying like the brute creation, none knows how, no one wellnigh cares to know; unheeded, unwarned, unprayed for, out of hearing of their Saviour's Name, and, as far as human sight can see, unrepentant, unknowing how to repent, and so, if forgiven, forgiven in their last hour, through His unrevealed mercy Who made them for Himself.

And yet God loves them still; God must love them still, for He still gives them life and time for repentance. He Who willeth not that any should perish, willeth that they too should be "converted and live." He knows that they can repent. He said of such as they are, that they should, by re-

[m] Orphans, the writer learnt above 40 years ago, were a known class, among these poor outcasts.

pentance, enter the kingdom of heaven, before the self-justifying Pharisees. To one whose sins were such as their's, who, being forgiven much, loved much, He Himself first appeared after the Resurrection, before His disciples, before His Mother, and made the penitent an Apostle to Apostles, the bearer of good tidings to those who should preach the Gospel to the world.

Yes, they too may be converted. Their very misery calls to the Father of mercy. He pleads with them by the very hatefulness of their sins to them. He pleads with them by the memory of their yet innocent childhood and youth, by the dim vision of days in which they had a home, and knew a father's or a mother's love. He pleads with them by His chastisements, by want, by sickness, by the aching of the heart in their hollow dreadful levity, by sight of others' hopeless death, or by fears for their own. They may yet turn to God; and if there be a penitent sinner, over whom Angels may rejoice, surely it may well be such as these, who fell through others' sin even more than through their own, and who seem to have been dragged on to their misery, rather than themselves to have sought it. A closer knowledge of their unhappy histories fills even man with deep compassion: how much more their God! If there is a sight touching to human sympathy, it is to see the returning blush of modesty again tinge the cheeks, whence it seemed, to man's eyes, to have been bleached and worn away for ever.

But whither should they turn, if they be turned? Who would dare receive them? Who believe their truth? Would that we were not so strict in our

charities, so fearful of being deceived! Would that we had some large home[n], whither we could receive at once for the Good Shepherd any of these His stray sheep who any how sought His fold again, to whom we could say, as He has said to us, "[o]Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Nor will it, I trust, henceforth continue to be a reproach to our English charity, that, in order to be the objects of it, people must have been guilty of some great sin. We shall not always, I trust, be more moved by the exciting tales of misery, than by a holy jealousy and tender love for souls, to keep for our Redeemer those His yet untainted temples. We shall not for ever, I trust, look on unheeding, unmoved, with a sort of fatalist indifference, as though sin must have its course, although Christ died, and rose, and ascended, and sent down the Holy Ghost, to efface the guilt of sin and conquer its dominion over us. We shall not for ever pass by on the other side, while thousands upon thousands, still pure, still, like your own sisters or daughters, capable of becoming virtuous wives and loving mothers, are plunged, heap after heap, in their yet white garments, into that black, loathsome, defiling, stifling pool of sin, and then congratulate ourselves and plume ourselves and thank God, as though we had done Him good service, if, here and there, we drag one or other with difficulty to the

[n] The wish has now, for many years, been fulfilled, doubtless in many other places, but also in the 'House of Peace' of the Sisters of Mercy, Plymouth, and the Refuges, where any who wishes for one night to be saved from sin, may be and are, received.

[o] S. Luke xi. 9.

shore, soiled, begrimed, half-dead, if so be Christ will yet restore life and cleanse them. "[p] This ought ye to have done, and not have left the other undone."

Yet although to protect innocence is yet more blessed, brighter, happier, than to help to restore the fallen, yet is it an Angel's office to bring back to the Lord, His lost, His banished, His prodigal sinful children from the far country of their wanderings. Turn not then away even from this. Even in the small beginnings hitherto, eight at least have each year been restored to their Redeemer; the Good Shepherd has rejoiced each year over eight of those for whom He shed His Blood, and whom He thus brought home. They might have become devils; they were the sport of devils; they may become, three have, we trust, through faith in His Blood, become already like unto the Angels.

Ye would look with reverence on this building in which we worship God, if, like the temple of Jerusalem, it were laid in ruins, and so had become the receptacle of every loathsome creature, and things defiling and unsightly had been gathered here. You would look mournfully on its stones, and it would pity you to see it in the dust. But how much holier, how much more sacred, how much more pitiable are those temples of God, which He once chose, which Christ once cleansed, whose inmost souls God the Holy Ghost once sanctified, that they might be for His Glory for ever.

If God, by His mercy, has kept you always pure in thought, word, deed, think ye of those once like

[p] S. Matt. xxiii. 23.

yourselves, once pure, joyous, innocent-looking, like the babe on its mother's breast. Ye cannot but long that they should, as far as possible, be again restored; ye cannot but shrink at the thought of leaving them to be as they are. If there be any man among you who once knew what deadly sin is, if any was ever a partner in such sin,—it may have been long past, but God saw it, God remembers it, and thou too must, in the Day of Judgement, again behold it. Each such sin is one more of that heap, which fills up the measure of sin, and brings the poor sinner to her untimely grave. Horrible will it be in the Day of Judgement, to hear a lost soul cry out to thee, 'but for thee I might have been saved; thou didst help on my damnation.' As thou wouldest not in that Day, if thou ever didst that deed, hear that cry to thy destruction, and thyself be dragged down with those whose sin thou sharedst, shew mercy in this thy day now. It must be a wondrous miracle of mercy, when one, who has shared in the destruction of another, himself escapes. But our Lord has said, "[q]Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Yet as thou wouldest obtain mercy abundantly, shew it abundantly; if thou wouldest reap abundantly, sow not sparingly.

[q] S. Matt. v. 7.

SERMON XXXVI.

ACTUALNESS OF THE INDWELLING OF GOD*.

Rom. viii. 9.

"*Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of God, he is none of His.*

The gift of this day is Almighty God Himself. Not grace alone, nor gracious influences, nor drawings of His love, nor lovingkindness, nor His love shed abroad in our hearts, contented His infinite, ineffable love to give us, unless He also gave Himself. It overpowers reason, it transcends imagination, the heart itself can scarce contain the thought, but that God has said it. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts," but "through the Holy Spirit Who is given to us." Uncreated Love pours created love into our souls, but by being Himself given to us. Thus was the Comforter more than to replace our loving Lord's Bodily visible Presence. "[a]I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth Whom the world cannot receive; because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. But

* Preached at a College-service, on Whitsunday, 1869.

[a] S. John xiv. 16, 17.

ye know Him, for He shall dwell with you and shall be in you." You have scarce observed yet perhaps, how often and how simply it is said, "the Holy Ghost dwelleth *in* you." "[b]If the Spirit of Him, Who raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell *in* you?" "[c]Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth *in* you?" "[d]Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, Who is *in* you, Whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" This is the normal Christian state. It is not the question here of being a weak imperfect Christian. It is of belonging to Christ or no; of being, or not being His. "Ye are not in the flesh but *in* the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth *in* you." The Holy Spirit of God, where He is, takes us, as it were, out of ourselves, lifts us above ourselves: nay the very flesh is not like the flesh of those who are its slaves. Physically it is the same flesh, but it is lighter and more spiritual, less clamorous in its appetites: as iron, glowing with the fire wherewith it is penetrated, has other qualities, and is flexible as it was not before. You yourselves can see this in extreme cases. When long-lived sensualism has done its work, you see in the bloated sensual countenance, that the flesh too has changed for the worse. Where the spiritual life has long transformed the soul, you see, as in some pictures of great saints, the flesh too spiritualised. It was not then a mere figure of speech, when the Apostle said, "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit." The soul is not in the flesh, such as it was. It is placed between two masters which demand its service. The

[b] Rom. viii. 11. [c] 1 Cor. iii. 16. [d] Ib. vi. 19.

flesh would have the soul obey its desires, compass its ends, contrive its gratifications, conform to its impulses. It would lower the soul below the irrational creation, in that it would make men abuse reason to minister to sin. The Spirit would bear the soul upwards to God. The soul lives where it loves. It lives immersed in the flesh or upborne in the Spirit: "if so be,—the Apostle says, provided that, "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." "But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ,"—see, he could not bear to imagine that they whom he loved had not the Spirit of Christ, he says not, "if *ye* have not," but "if *any man* hath not the Spirit of Christ, this man is none of His." "Hath not!" what a word! We speak of having talents, gifts, powers, attainments, learning, eloquence, skill, wit, possessions, as things which, more or less, as we deem, men may wield, dispose of, as they will. S. Paul speaks of another possession, a possession, not which we can wield, but which ennobles, transforms, illumines, empowers, enlarges, transfigures, nay, they say boldly, '[e]deifies' the soul. Still a possession! God the Holy Ghost so puts Himself at the command of His creatures, that we may have Him for our own, or, alas! that men may alienate, grieve Him away from them, may quench His light in them. Nay, so does He will to put Himself at the disposal of Christ's redeemed, that His holy inspirations await their invitations. His Divine thoughts inform their human thoughts, so that they can hardly or not at

[e] 'If He' [the Holy Ghost] 'is not to be worshipped, how does He deify [θεοῖ] me through Baptism?' S. Greg. Naz. Orat. 31. n. 28. p. 574 Ben.

all tell, what are their thoughts, what His; only they know that all which is good is His; *they* are but the harp whose strings vibrate, as His breath passes over them, and yield what harmony He wills.

Yet on us Christians He acts from within. They are not merely the motions of grace, as they fell on Saul, or now too, touch every heart in the Heathen world, which will respond to His touch. It is not only a voice like that to Socrates, withholding him from what God in His Providence willed him not to do. It does not merely strengthen man's natural generous feelings, such as made [f] Scipio a greater conqueror when he gave back to her betrothed the captive virgin of intense beauty, than when his earthly glories were crowned at the field of Zama; for, by the unknown grace of God, he had conquered himself. Nor is it only like that strong overpowering grace, to which the long-resisting soul at last yields, ends its weary rebellions, and casting itself at its Father's Feet, is again enfolded in His Arms; "the dead is again alive, the lost is found."

The office which God the Holy Ghost vouchsafes to take towards Christians is, Indwelling. To communicate Himself is the Being of God. God the Father ever exists, as communicating Himself to the Son: the Father through the Son, or as One Principle with the Son, to the Holy Ghost, in Whom the Holy Trinity is completed, the Bond of the Father and the Son. Inseparable is the Trinity. Where One Person of the Holy Trinity is, there is the Whole. For the Son dwells in the Father and the Father in the Son, and the Holy Ghost reposes

[f] Livy xxvi. 50.

and habitates in the Father and the Son. And so our Lord expresses the loving communication of the Father and the Son to those who do His commandments, and love Him; "[g] We will come unto him and make our abode *in* him." Yet in some special way it is God the Holy Ghost Who dwelleth in us. His Presence within us is the pledge of our resurrection to life eternal. "[h] If the Spirit of Him Who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell *in* you, He Who raised Jesus from the dead will vivify your mortal bodies through His Spirit, which indwelleth *in* you." His presence in us is our bond of union with Christ. If He dwelleth in us, our prayers are not our prayers only but His prayers in us. God, informing our thoughts, suggesting our longings, pleads with God. "[i] Ye have received," he saith, "the Spirit of adoption of sons" (i. e. the Spirit through Whom God makes us His sons,) "*in* Whom we cry Abba Father," not *by* Whom only but *in* Whom, as he saith, "[k] Whoso dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God *in* him."

"God dwelleth in us." What words they are, though we have so often heard them! What the soul is to the body, *that*, God is to the soul. The life of the body is the soul, the Life of the soul is God. We know not where our soul is, but through it, indwelling the body, we live, we think, we love. So through God indwelling the soul, we have our spiritual eternal life begun in us; we think all the good thoughts we have. Our good is not merely our's, not chiefly or primarily our's, but His Who,

[g] S. John xiv. 23. [h] Rom. viii. 11.
[i] Ib. 15. [k] I John iv. 16.

dwelling in us, worketh in us to will and to do, and rejoiceth in His works in us.

But then what an existence, aweful for the very greatness of the love of God! What a tingling closeness of God! "[l] Christ *in* you, the hope of glory." Holy is this Church, because consecrated to God, because, where His own are gathered in His Name, there is He. Holy to us is any picture of our Redeemer, because it images to us, as men can conceive, His countenance of tender love. But there is in this Church what is more hallowed than itself, although for centuries Christ has been often here; more holy than even a life-like image of our dear Redeemer Himself; holier than the vessels, which (as they said of old) bare His Body and Blood;[m]— yourselves. For all these are material things: you are the living image of God; you are the living temples of God; in you, in your measure, dwelleth God the Holy Ghost substantially. As then you would not defile this temple, as you would not tread and trample under foot or spit upon a likeness of your Redeemer, reverence yourselves. Bring not defiling thoughts into your souls: it is to bring them into the very Presence of God. Utter not polluting words with the tongue, wherewith God the Holy Ghost enableth you to call God your Father, Jesus your Lord. And, what follows from this, defile not those living temples, wherein He dwells. When Satan tempts

[l] Col. i. 27.

[m] 'What is the Altar, but the throne of the Body and Blood of Christ.' S. Optatus de schism. Donat. vi. 1. 'This great crime has been doubled by you, in that ye broke too the chalices, the bearers of the Blood of Christ.' Ib. c. 2.

you, remember what a greatness God has given you, to have in the hostelry of your souls God as your Guest, to abide there, if you will, for ever. He has carried our Manhood into Heaven; He has sent down God on earth; that where He is, there we may be also, that we may love God through God. He loves you individually, infinitely. One by one He has given you His Holy Spirit; one by one He has made you His own. Give yourselves anew this day to Him Who gave Himself to you. It is for your own sake, that He longeth for you; for He alone knoweth what He hath in store for them who, through His love, love Him. He alone knows what an intolerable loss it is, to lose Him, our God, for ever!

SERMON XXXVII.

THE HOLY TRINITY[a].

1 S. John iii. 2, 3.

"*We shall see Him as He Is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.*"

Why does the world love God so little? Why, (I fear that I must add, to most,) Why do you? You would hardly say, confidently, "[b] I *do* love the Lord my God with *all* my heart, and with *all* my soul and with *all* my might." And yet this was God's command even to Israel, who knew but dimly of God's Love. This, and nothing short of it, we were taught as children, was our duty to God, "[c] to love Him with *all* my heart, with *all* my mind, with *all* my soul, with *all* my strength." We were to love Him, indivisibly, with all the powers of mind, with all the affections which He had given us. We were to associate nothing with Him. He is above all; He made us for Himself; He is the End of our being; all things, which He has made, receive from Him their fleeting being, and pass away. God Alone

[a] Preached in the College-service, Trinity Sunday, 1875.
[b] Deut. vi. 5. [c] S Mark xii. 30.

abideth. The Beauty, from which is all created beauty; the Goodness, from which is all created good; the Loveliness, of which everything lovely is a shadowy likeness; the Wisdom, which is the Archetype of all created wisdom; wherein, without confusion, lie all things past present and to come; all possible, all imaginable things; the things which are and the things which are not, and things which might be, but which never shall be; which encircléth all eternity, containeth in itself all immensity, is the bound of all infinity. What should one say of love, of which our little earthly shadows are so winning, so attractive, that each tiny lustre or spark hides from our eyes the dark corners unilluminated by it. Yet God is Uncreated, Unlimited, Unlimitable Love, Essential Love in Himself. Love is the Divine Essence. The life of God is Love. His Eternal Being is Infinite Love, having its full contentment in Itself, because the Father, Who is Infinite Love, ever loveth the Son and is beloved by Him; and the One Love of the Father and the Son ever breatheth forth the Holy Ghost, Who is Love, and returning to Them, completes the life of God. In that eternity, before creation was, before time was, before there was matter or spirit, save that one Uncreated Spirit, God Himself, His Unchanging Joy was His Unchanging Unimaginable Love.

Yet His Love willed to communicate Himself out of Himself. In all eternity, all whom God would create, lay in His Infinite Mind. There lay the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, Whom He already loved with a tranquil unvarying Love: there lay all the

Choirs of the Heavenly Spirits, each with its own perfections; nay one must believe, each individual beauty of being, (as Michael the Archangel is shewn to us different from the Archangel Gabriel) but all and each perfect in supernatural grace. *There* lay the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom He willed to unite His creation with Himself. *There* was His Throne, whereon He, Man with us, but in His Godhead Co-equal with the Father, should reign for ever and ever, the Object of the admiration, adoration, love of all creation. But *there* lay too in the light of His Love, every individual of our race, whom He willed, each in his time, to create; the highest saints, Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, Martyrs, the Virgin-Mother, but also the tiniest of our tiny selves. There we lay, in the waveless Mirror of the Divine Mind, every gift and grace which He, in the whole course of our lives, would bestow upon each; our calls, re-calls, re-recalls, every inspiration of His Spirit, every Sacrament, one by one. All were present there. For "[d] known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." There we lay individually in His Infinite Mind; there He loved us with an everlasting Infinite Love, each as much the object of His Love, as if there were no other creature to love. For His Love is, like Himself, Infinite, Indivisible.

Why then is God so little loved? We cannot pretend that our love is not little. If we did, we should only shew that we did not know what supernatural love is, or that God is worthy of all love.

[d] Acts xv. 18.

God is so little loved, because He is so little known. We cannot love what we do not know. Be the object of love ever so much worthy of all love, *we* cannot love that, whose loveliness we know not of. Why then do we *know* God so little? He has made known unto us the Divine secrets and condescension of His Infinite Love. He has loved us, not in word, but in deed. Unless He told us, we could not think that we, being such as we are, could be the objects of His Infinite Love. He tells us, that He "[e]*so* loved the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Holy Scripture is full of those two loves: God's love for us, and our love for things out of God. "[f]Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." What? do not our hearts burn with the words? God has loved us, as He loved the Only Son of His Love? "[g]*As* the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you;" "[h]The Father Himself loveth you:" "[i]For His great love wherewith He loved us;" "[j]God, our Father, which hath loved us." "[k]Not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins;" "If God *so* loved us." So that it becomes a sort of proper Name of God, "[l]He Who loved us." "[m]We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Why then is God, Who has so revealed His Love, so little loved? Because He is so little thought of. Amid the diseased activity of our time, people have

[e] S. John iii. 16. [f] Ib. xvii. 23. [g] Ib. xv. 9.
[h] Ib. xvi. 27. [i] Eph. ii. 4. [j] 2 Thess. ii. 16.
[k] 1 S. John iv. 10, 11. [l] Rev. i. 5. [m] Rom. viii. 37.

no time to spare to think of God, Who in His Infinite Love, made us, one by one, to have Him as our God, and to be happy in His Love, unceasingly, everlastingly, unchangeably, except that His Infinite Love will ever be new. It is the history pourtrayed of us by Him Who knew His creatures, and their abuse of their free-will. "[n]They made light of it and went their ways." People's idols are not the less real, because they are only set up in the heart; nor is the homage of the knee the only or the chief homage. Do we give to God the homage of our knees, and to some idol of the world the homage of our hearts? An idol is whatever displaces God in the affections. It has not been the heathen world alone, which has 'worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.' Men do not the less depose God, because they simply ignore Him, and set up 'the reign of law' instead of the reign of the Living God, Who still impresses by an ever-present working His laws upon His creation. The great goddess Diana—the personification of the powers of self-continuance and sustenance which God continually supplies to His creatures—is not the less worshipped because we have not "[o]the image which fell down from Jupiter," and she is worshipped only under the name of 'Natural selection' who, abstraction as she is, is arrayed with the foresight and discriminative wisdom of the Creator; only, that she has no being. Men are so busy with their own discoveries about God's natural creation, that they have no time for thought about the Creator, and, since spirit is no object of the senses, assume that it is not, because

[n] S. Matt. xxii. 5. [o] Acts xix. 35.

when it has left the body they cannot find it in dead matter. They see not God, so they assume that He is not.

Mammon again is not less our idol, because we only idolise our material prosperity. And yet that is our god, which is our last end; to which we refer all our acts; which is the resting-place of our minds; to which our being tends; to which our thoughts, when undistracted by the world, return of their own accord; as fire goes upwards or a stone is attracted downwards. The world too has its evil trinity[p], "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" whereby the Evil one would draw down and enslave to this earth souls which were made to find their bliss in the bosom of their God.

And therefore, because our souls are so easily attracted to shadowy beauty and fleeting goods and pleasures which pale as soon as they are enjoyed, God reveals Himself, not only as our Creator, to claim our obedience; not only as our Lord, to exact our service; not only as our Judge, to Whom we must give account of the use which we have made of His gifts of intelligence or of the world, of nature or of grace; not even as a Father, to demand our honour. He reveals to us all this and more; but He does more; He reveals to us *Himself*. He reveals His *Being*, the sight of which shall be such exceeding bliss, that thenceforth the soul shall be wrapt in Him, and cannot part with Him, because it is irrevocably transfixed with His Beatific Love. He does not reveal to us such glimpses, as human reason

[p] Soliloq. c. xxxvi.

might have guessed at; such as it guesses at now, a First Cause, (if it allows Him to be so much,) a Creator Who has made us, because He was tired of being alone; a Deity Who takes His ease and does not trouble Himself about His creatures.

He reveals Himself (as was sung to Him in that glorious Creed) '*One* Uncreate, *One* Eternal, *One* Incomprehensible, *One* Almighty, *One* God, *One* Lord,' yet not in the cold isolation of an Unipersonal God, but as existing in Three, of Equal Glory, of coeternal Majesty, of absolute Oneness and simplicity of nature; God the Father, ever pouring forth His Being into the Coeternal Son, without beginning, without change, without end; now, as before all worlds and in all Eternity, the Self-same, producing eternally the Coeternal Word or Wisdom; an Object of Infinite Love, because in Person different; yet that Love so perfect, because They are in Essence absolutely One, with a Oneness which we know because He has declared it, but of which all created oneness is not a shadow; and from Both, as from one Principle, is eternally breathed forth the Holy Spirit, the Bond of the Father and the Son; Their Natural Individual Love, Their Unspeakable Peace, Their Individual Unity.

Great will it be for those who, by God's mercy shall attain, to behold God, most Holy, most Omnipotent, most Merciful, most Beautiful, most Strong; ever working, ever at rest; supporting, filling and overflowing; creating, nourishing, maturing; the Essential Wisdom, Goodness, Power, Light, Truth, Holiness, Life; all these alike, all one in the Father Son and Holy Ghost, and all incomprehensible.

God is Holy, but with a holiness which surpasses all our powers of thought; God is Mighty, but His might we understand not; Just, but with a justice we cannot conceive; nay, justice, holiness, might, mercy, tenderness, are in Him absolutely one, in and with His Being.

Great will it be to see in Him the cause of all effects, the solution of all perplexities, the reason of all which is, the centre of all seeming contradictories. "[q] In Thy light we shall see light." Light, boundless, incorporeal, incorruptible, incomprehensible, unfailing, unextinguishable, unapproachable, uncreated, truth-imparting, Divine, which illumines the eyes of Angels, which gladdeneth the youth of the saints, the Light of lights and Fountain of life, which is Thou, O Lord my God. Thou art the Light "in Whose light we shall see Light," Thee in Thyself, in the brightness of Thy countenance, when we shall see Thee, face to Face. What is to see face to Face, but as the Apostle says, "[r] to know even as also I am known?" To know Thy truth and Thy glory, this is to know Thy Face. To know the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, the clemency of the Holy Ghost, the one and individual Essence of the very Supreme Trinity. All which seemed to us dark here will be revealed to us in one lightning flash of the light, now inaccessible. By the light of glory which God gives shall we see the Light which He Is. But not the sight of the manifold wisdom of God, although Angels too now see it the more in His mercy to us; not the sight of His Majesty or His Glory or His Beauty, not all which God has, shall be

[q] Ps. xxxvi. 9. [r] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

the bliss of eternity. It shall be the sight and knowledge of God *in Himself.* "[s] Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "[t] This is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." "We shall see Him as He Is." We shall see Him wholly, Father Son and Holy Ghost: we shall see and be blessed in the sight of their mutual Eternal Love. O thought beyond all thought, condescension beyond all conceivable condescension, that we shall see God not only as He is to us, not manifesting Himself to us, by His relations to us, by bestowing on us His transporting jubilant exstatic Love, bearing us out of ourselves in Love, but we shall see Him in Himself as He Is, Father Son and Holy Ghost; how the Father loveth the Son, and the Son is all love to the Father, and the Holy Ghost is ever breathed forth by Both, and poureth back His love to Both; and the Love of All Three Persons is infinite, unceasing, unvarying, the Self-same; for God is One and God is Love.

Is this incomprehensible? Yes, and this is a joy above other joys, that it *is* incomprehensible. Did God only reveal what our souls could grasp, He would not reveal Himself; for the finite cannot grasp the Infinite. '[u] Then we know something of God, when we cannot comprehend Him.'

Yes, this will be to those who attain, part of the bliss of eternity, that no created mind can '[x] comprehend the fulness of Divinity, which is in God.

[s] S. Matt. v. 8.

[t] S. John xvii. 3.

[u] S. Augustine.

[x] Alcuin de Trin. ii. 16. Opp. i. 2. p. 722.

Even an angelic nature cannot comprehend God, because He is truly Incomprehensible. According to the measure of the gift of God, angels, or the souls of the blessed, understand God. So, although after the resurrection human nature will advance to be equal to the Angels, and shall rise glorified to contemplate God, it yet cannot *fully* see His Essence, but to each of the saints shall His glory be manifested to the sufficiency of its bliss.' 'The invisible, incomprehensible Trinity is perfectly known as It is, to Itself alone.' God Alone can comprehend Himself, i.e. the Father Alone can comprehend the Son and the Holy Ghost; and the Son Alone the Father and the Holy Ghost; and the Holy Ghost Alone the Father and the Son, from Whom, as One Principle, He proceedeth, and yet in Nature not Three but One; for as was sung just now in our glorious Creed, 'there are not three Incomprehensible nor three Uncreated; but One Uncreated and One Incomprehensible.'

Other Festivals in our Christian year, have set before us the condescension of our God, how God was Incarnate; God was born; God, made Man, suffered; God, made Man, died, rose again, ascended in the Manhood which He had taken; and God the Holy Ghost condescended to come down to dwell among us and in us, and, if we would, to take possession of our hearts. To-day is the festival, not of what God has done for us, but of Himself, what He Is, what it is His Supreme Unceasing Bliss to be, Father Son and Holy Ghost. To-day a door is, as we heard, opened in heaven to exhibit Him, as He exists in Himself, as we can know Him to be,

although as yet we see Him not, yet as He encompasses us, exists all around us, close to us, in this Church, every where, so that if our eyes were not holden, we should see Him, Father Son and Holy Ghost, One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.

Yet this too is our Festival. For He Who is *All*, vouchsafes to be *our* God, who are nothing but what He has made us: nay He vouchsafes, so to speak, to belong to us individually. Each one of us, poor, abject, contemptible in the world's eyes, little in years, in mind, in all other gifts of His own, He allows, yea He bids us say; "[y] O God, Thou art *my* God;" "[z] Thou art *my* God, and I will praise Thee;" "[a] I will extol Thee, *my* God, and bless Thy Name for ever and ever."

Into the name of this our God we were baptised. This confession of the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost we then received. '[b] This was given us as the partner and presider over our whole life, the One Godhead and Power, existing in Unity in the Three and comprehending the Three severally.' Hereby we came to dwell '[c] with the Trinity,' hereby, as an impregnable wall, we were, if we willed, '[d] fenced round by the Trinity;' herewith, as time went on, we were blessed in Confirmation: in This Name are we consecrated to the Priesthood; our penitential Litany opens with prayers to Each One of Them to 'have mercy upon us.' Our Psalmody opens with singing glory to Them; each Psalm closes

[y] Ps. lxiii. 1. [z] Ib. cxviii. 28. [a] Ib. cxlv. 1.
[b] S. Greg. Naz. Orat 40 de Bapt. n. 41. p. 724.
[c] Ib. n. 16. p. 702. [d] Ib. n. 10. p. 697.

with it. What are we, earthworms and sin-defiled, that we should be already admitted to the Angels' song, 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,' or, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory?' In this Name, man and wife are made one: if any fall into deadly sin, in Their Name, they are, when penitent, absolved; even after Holy Communion, we are sent into the world again, blessed in Their Name; when we have parted with those who are called away before us, it is with a blessing in Their Name, that we are fortified to return alone to our work on earth: with a blessing in Their Name, our visitation, when sick, is closed. With the blessing in the Name of the Holy Trinity is our spiritual life on earth begun: with it it is closed. The sight of Them is the bliss of Eternity.

Only remember the condition, my sons, "[e]Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." Then it follows, that they who are not pure in heart or shall not have again, through the Blood and merits of Jesus and penitent sorrow and the grace of God, purified it, shall *not* see Him. "We shall see Him;" not any how; for the wicked also shall see Him when they rise to shame and everlasting contempt;" but, "We shall see Him as He Is." "And," it follows, "every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as He is pure." The mirror of the soul must be cleansed, if the light of God is to shine upon it; human passions envelope the soul in a mist, that it can see nothing, love nothing, desire nothing, beyond. Like only understands like,

[e] S. Matt. v. 8.

loves like. Light, which gladdens the sound eye, is a misery to the diseased. The pure in heart can alone long for God. The soul is capacious enough to contain God: for God will enlarge it: too narrow is it to contain the world *and* God. God will give Himself to those who love Him. They who hunger and thirst after Him, shall be filled by Him. Even among the blessed, who, by the richness of God's mercy in Christ Jesus, shall attain, the Beatific Vision shall be enlarged or lessened, according to the measure of their love and longing. "[f]That understanding which participates most of the light of glory, shall see God more perfectly. And *he* shall participate most of the light of glory, who hath most of charity. For where is most charity, there is more longing, and longing, in a manner, maketh him who longeth most fit and prepared to receive what he longeth for. Whoso then shall have most of charity shall see God more perfectly and be most blessed.'

Make then, this day, now, thy choice, whose thou wilt be, whom thou wilt have as thy everlasting Portion. "[g]I," said the aged Joshua, "am going, this day, the way of all the earth; choose you this day whom ye will serve." "[h]How long halt ye," said Elijah, "between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." "[i]Ye cannot serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Choose Him, Whose you would be everlastingly; Him Who loves you with

[f] S. Thomas 1 P. q. 12 art. vi.
[g] Josh. xxiii. 14; xxiv. 15.
[h] 1 Kings xviii. 21. [i] S. Matt. vi. 24.

an everlasting Love; not him who hates you with an undying hate. Choose *Him*, Who has chosen you.

'[k] Here on earth ye can but clasp
Things that perish in the grasp.
While you may,
Lift your faces to the skies,
God Himself will be your prize.
Come away
Where the happy heavenly host
Sing Father Son and Holy Ghost.'

Holy, Holy, Holy, Merciful and Mighty,
God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity. Amen.

[k] Hymns from the Parisian Breviary, Vigil of All Saints.

SERMON XXXVIII.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY, THE REVELATION OF DIVINE LOVE.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

1 S. John i. 4.

"Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

'What is God in Himself?' 'What is God to us?' They are the two questions which human nature must ever ask, on which it must ever restlessly think, until it comes within the light of God's truth. We ever need the thought of both. In Himself God is infinite Majesty; to us He is infinite humility and love. Heathen reason falsely elevated God; Heathen passion falsely degraded Him. They conceived of God as removed above the world, so as to be careless and unconcerned about it, contemplating only His own excellencies; or, they thought of Him as mingled in the world, of like passions with corrupted man. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity shews us His true Majesty; the doctrine of the Incarnation, His true humility. In the Holy Trinity, we adore Him as He Is in Himself, One Whole, Inconceivable, Unutterable, Indivisible

Divine Essence, existing in Himself, of Himself; One, but not Alone, not distinct in place, not existing apart, not unlike, although distinct, not unequal in Persons, not imperfect or lacking in aught, Himself the full contentment of Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each is the full highest Good in Himself; and all are simply One. In the Incarnation we behold God, humbling Himself yet not lowering Himself; condescending to us, yet not losing anything of His own; making Himself God with man, one of us, yet upraising, hallowing, making us one with Him; glorifying us, yet losing nothing of His own essential glory.

In other mysteries of faith, we ever see something which we can comprehend, although something also which passes knowledge. We have some thought, how God could join the Manhood of our Lord with Himself, since so He willed. Soul and body are one man; the Soul and Body of the Man Christ Jesus, are with His Godhead, One Christ. We can have some thought how, when He died for us, although the Soul and Body were for those three days parted, the Godhead never parted either from the Body or the Soul of the Man Christ Jesus. We can think how, from that ineffable union with the Godhead, our Lord's Human Nature, sinlessly conceived, could not have one thought, one motion of the will, other than that of His Divine Nature; but although a distinct Will, It willed at once, all which the Godhead willed. We can think that, as our soul dwells unseen in our bodies, so God the Holy Ghost can, unseen, unfelt save by good thoughts desires feelings affections will, of which He is the

Author, dwell in these our poor bodies; or how He dwelt without measure in our Lord, that from Him He might flow forth to us.

In all God's intercourse with man, we may have some thoughts, although we can understand nothing perfectly. We have some thoughts, because all this love of God is shewn to man, in Man, for man; our thoughts fail us, because it is God Who doth it. In all, we know what God doth. In none, we know how God doth it. We know that God created the heaven and the earth and all things therein, and ourselves alone in His Image and likeness. What do we know about creation? We know how to make one thing from another. We know nothing what it is, to create out of nothing. We know how we are born. What the principle of life is, how our souls are united with our bodies, what a spirit is, what the very sleep is, the nightly refreshment of these poor bodies, we know not.

But of the Nature of God Himself, we have no thoughts. It is not the doctrine of the Holy Trinity alone, which is above all thought. What can we think of the Essence of God? If any could explain the Essence of God, he could doubtless understand the Mystery of the Trinity. We use the words Eternity, Omnipresence, Spirit. We know the meaning, as far as it concerns us to know, that God has not a body like us; that He is without beginning, without end, without bounds; that wheresoever we are, *there* is God. But if we would explain the things themselves, our thoughts fail us. Our own souls are spirits, although not of the Essence of God. We cannot imagine to ourselves a

spirit. What we think of is only some fine subtle matter. But matter, however fine and subtle, was made by God; it cannot be God. Who can imagine to himself eternity backwards? Who could imagine a river which had no beginning? We go in mind back, and back, and back. But we are lost at last, and must own that we cannot think how God ever *was*. Look back steadily, think of ages upon ages, when there was no creation, no angels, sun, moon or stars, nothing but God; and still God was. Look back further and further and further. Still God was. And had not God ever been, He could never have begun to be, nor could we have ever been. Yet how He ever was, we cannot even think. The mind falls back upon itself, stunned and baffled and powerless.

But again, do we know how God Is? If we knew how God IS, we might know how He always was. For as God Is, so He always *was*. Where is God? We know; everywhere. But where is everywhere? We know the distance of some stars; we can imagine space beyond space, at distances all but infinite. But again we think of boundless space as that, to which *we* can set no bound. It is not only that God fills all space which we can think of, but that there can be no bound at all to God. For if there could be any thing without God, that too would be God. We can as little think then of God's Infinity as of His Eternity.

It has then been a great ignorance, as well as rebellion against God, when the mystery of the Holy Trinity has been alleged, as a ground why people could not believe what God declared of Himself.

Then might we think indeed that God had not spoken much to us of Himself, if we *could* wholly understand it. Rather we should the more adore the perfections of God, because, being such as we are, we can only contain some slight ray of them. He tells us of His Goodness, and Wisdom, and Power, and Love. We can conceive nothing of Wisdom, which sees all things at once, or Power, which is used in perfect rest. But of these, although in Him Infinite and different in kind from any thing in us, He placed some traces in us, when He created us in His Image and likeness. But when He vouchsafes to tell us how He exists in Himself, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, He lifts the veil of light unapproachable, whose dazzling brightness shrouds Him from us, and gives us a glimpse into His very Essence, into His Essential Bliss. His Bliss is Union and Love within Himself. His Bliss is the Union of Infinite, Unchanging Love. The very Mystery on which the pride of human reason has so often miserably stumbled, has been the Ineffable Oneness of the Union of Divine Love. 'The Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet they are not three Gods, but One God.' How Three, and yet One? Tell me, what the Being of God is, what is His Own simple Essence, what His Spirit is, and then you may ask me, how He is Three, and yet One.

But this is the very greatness of His Adorable Being, that no created Being, nor Angel or Archangel or Seraphim, although nearest in the circles of His Eternal love, can grasp or measure it. We know not what concerns us not. But what concerns

us, He has, in what degree we can receive it, made known to us, how His very existence is Love. "God is love." The Blessed Three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are wholly One. No difference is there, in degree or time. One is not before the Other; One has not more, or the Other less. One Mind, One Will, One Wisdom, One Power, One Bliss, One Essence have They; nor have the Three Holy Persons more than One. The Father never existed without the Son; He exists in the Son, and the Son in the Father; and Both in the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost in Both. So One are They, that no space can be conceived, where the One is and the Others are not. They inexist in One Another in Love. And what must that Love be which is so united, so uniting! The Infinite Essence of the Infinite, Love which is not as ours, a mere quality, but the very Being. Infinite Love, loving, existing in, containing, one with, Coeternal, Coequal Love.

Without the knowledge of the Being of the Holy Trinity, Three yet One God, we had not known what Divine Love is. We and all created beings could contain but some little of His Love. We could only conceive of God, as ready to pour forth His love on His whole creation, yet, if one may so say, with no vent for it, nothing on which it could pour Itself out wholly, because nothing could contain it. We could not conceive of Infinite Love, with nothing which it could love infinitely. Now we know how God can love, how that Holy Boundless Being, Who fills all space, Who created and upholds all things, Who made us too in His Image, in Whom and through Whom all things are, Who is Himself above

all and through all and in all, exists only in Love, that He loves Infinitely, with His Whole Infinite Being, what is Infinitely to be loved.

And this God, Who has thus revealed Himself, as Infinite Love, loves with His Whole Being, each one of us. Nor only so, but the more to set before us the greatness of His Love, He has told us how we are the objects of the Love of each Person of the All-Holy Trinity. About us alone, They said together, "[a] Let Us make man in Our own Image." To us that Image was restored, when in our Baptism, the Three Holy Names were called over us, and we were baptized in the Name of the Father Son and Holy Ghost. God the Father so loved us, "[b] that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God the Son taught His Apostle to say, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." God the Holy Ghost, Who is Love, vouchsafes to be given to us, to shed abroad His love in our hearts. God the Father calleth us to eternal glory, by Christ Jesus; God the Son has merited for us not that glory only which we forfeited, but that we should be partakers of that glory into which His All-Holy Manhood has entered, that we might be "[c] glorified together" with Him, nay not His glory only, but that we should enter into His Joy, His own Joy, the Joy of our Redeeming Lord, God and Man. God the Holy Ghost, as "[d] the Spirit of Glory and of God, resteth upon" us. "[e] The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, gives us the Spirit of wisdom;

[a] Gen. i. 26. [b] S. John iii. 16. [c] Rom. viii. 17.
[d] 1 S. Peter iv. 14. [e] Eph. i. 18.

that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of His glory." Christ is in us "[f] the hope of glory." God the Father makes us His own sons, in the Coeternal Son; God the Son makes us brethren; He is not ashamed to own us, lost as we were, but makes us, with Him, sons of the Living God; "[g] and because we are sons, God sendeth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." God the Father makes us His children. God the Son unites us with Himself and makes us members of Himself. God the Holy Ghost makes these our poor corruptible bodies, His own temple, the temple wherein it pleaseth Him to dwell, the holy temple of the living God, yea, wherein, if we will not chase Him away by sin from which He would keep us, the Lord will abide for ever, filling it with His everlasting joy and peace and love.

My brethren, just now, we were contemplating that boundless Ocean of love which God is; how Love unceasingly, in all eternity, flows as the very Being of the Eternal Father into the Coeternal Son; not flow*ed* but flows in one ever-present Communication of His Love; how the Love of the Father and the Son goeth forth into God the Holy Ghost, and from Him goes back in one Eternal flow of Infinite Unchanging Bliss. Just now, we were thinking, as we *could* in the flesh, and as God leads us, of that unbounded fire of Love, ever abounding, ever full, not over-flowing, because Infinite Love is poured forth and contained in, Love Infinite. But now, how does that love overflow to us, my brethren? It is of the very nature of love to communicate Itself.

[f] Col. i. 27. [g] Gal. iv. 6.

In one eternal circle of love, one unchanging union of love, the Father ever produces the Coeternal Son. They exist, as the Father and the Son. They *are*, as they ever were. The Son is ever of the Father, not the Father *of* the Son; the Holy Ghost, of Both, and All but One. But in that Divine Relation, the Father is the Eternal Source of the Coeternal Being of the Son. "[f] As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." '[g] The Father hath life in Himself; the Son hath life in Himself; but the life which the Son has in Himself is the Essence of the Father, eternally derived from the Father, so that they are not two Gods, but one God, yet equally, without any inferiority existing in the Son.'

In this Eternal Communion of Love, Infinite, Unchangeable, Unexhaustible because Infinite, yet the Self-same, is the Eternal Bliss of God. And when God willed to go forth out of Himself, and to create, His Will was freely to communicate Himself to His creatures, freely receiving Him. He formed the Orders of Angels; He formed us to replace the fallen angels; He breathed into us the breath of life; He gives us the new birth from Himself of water and the Spirit; He gives us the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of His Son, in our hearts; if we love Him, the Father and the Son come to dwell anew and more largely in us by the Spirit, that we may be one in them, as the Father and the Son are One. Eternal Love, Eternal Union, Eternal Bliss, are the objects of our re-creation. The love of the Father, and the grace of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the

[f] S. John v. 26. [g] S. Aug.

communication of the Holy Ghost, are the threefold bond whereby the Holy Trinity would bind us in one to each other and to Them. "Our Fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." And wherein does that Fellowship consist? A "community" it is; that They take us unto Them; we give ourselves to Them; we belong to Them, and henceforth He says, "Son, all that I have is Thine." He has entitled us to all which is His; all which we can receive of what is Their's; all of Their's, which we can be enlarged to receive, Their love, Their goodness, Their joy; Themselves, Who are All in all. So that each one of us may say, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine."

SERMON XXXIX.*

THE BEING OF GOD, IN WHOM WE ARE.

Acts xvii. 27, 28.

"*Though He be not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and are.*"

Scripture teaches us to think of God, as in heaven: our Lord teaches us to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven." He will not have us think of God as confined to this earth. Yet neither would He have us conceive of Him as locally in heaven only—Him, the Infinite. Wherever heaven or the heaven of heavens are, wherever space is, there is God; or rather wherever God is, *there* is space; for space is the Presence of God. Eternity comprises all time, but time has no relation to eternity; all those æons of time, which some have lately amused themselves so busily in counting backwards for the duration of matter, are not a drop in the shoreless ocean of God's Eternal Being. They not only could not measure it, but have no relation to it. So neither could countless spaces, added to countless spaces, approximate to the infinite immensity of God. For all space and number has bounds. Heap space on space

* Preached in a College-Service, 23rd Sunday after Trinity, 1874.

and time on time, you have but multiplied what is finite and circumscribed. A number of finites cannot fill up the Infinite. But since the Being of God is simple, indivisible, and the eternity of God is One unchanging 'Now,' present at each moment of our fleeting time; so in His Infinity of Being He is wholly present in every spot of His creation, however circumscribed and narrow. God is wholly everywhere, but the Whole of Him nowhere. 'I imagined Thee,' S. Augustine[a] says to God, 'on every part environing and penetrating Thy creation, though every way Infinite; as if there were a sea, everywhere and on every side through unmeasured space, one only boundless sea, and it contained in itself some sponge, huge but bounded; that sponge must needs in all its parts be filled from that immeasurable sea; so conceived I Thy creation, itself finite, full of Thee the Infinite.' Image, helpful perhaps, though wholly inadequate, since a material substance can but touch outwardly on another substance. God is present within and without, since nothing which He has created can displace Himself. The imagined sea, in which we are, would touch us with some portion of itself only. God is present to us, in us, in His indivisible simple Essence.

Observe the simplicity of the Being of God. For the knowledge of it has much to do with our thoughts of the Presence of God to us. We are apt to speak of God in a very vague way. We acknowledge His Presence, yet are apt to think of Him, as in some way not near us; we hardly think of Him, as actually spread around us, so that we actually are, move

[a] Conf. vii. n. 7. p. 112. Oxf. Tr.

in God, but still less that He, "in Whom we live and move," is the One, Personal, Holy, Infinite but Indivisible God, Father Son and Holy Ghost; the Father Who created us; the Son Who redeemed us; the Holy Ghost Who by His Indwelling sanctifies those who will be sanctified, yet One in Their eternal purpose of love to us, One in Their absolute simplicity of Being.

This simplicity of the Being of God is a first principle of faith. God Himself proclaimed it in that revelation of Himself to Israel, "[b] The Lord our God is One Lord," absolutely, simply, numerically One. For if God were not absolutely Simple Being, there were in Him what is God and what is not God. One in God are His Substance and His Attributes. He is great, good, eternal, Almighty; but He Himself may be said to be His own Deity; Himself His own Greatness; Himself His own Goodness; Himself His own Eternity; Himself His own Almightiness[c]. For there cannot be anything out of Himself whereby He is great, good, eternal, Almighty. What God hath, that He Is. '[d] He is supreme Essence, supreme Life, supreme Reason, supreme Justice, supreme Wisdom, supreme Truth, supreme Goodness, supreme Greatness, supreme Beauty, supreme Immortality, supreme Incorruptibility, supreme Unchangeableness, supreme Beatitude, supreme Eternity, supreme Power, supreme Unity; for this is nothing else than to say, that He supremely Is, supremely liveth, and the rest in like way.'

[b] Deut. vi. 4. [c] S. Aug. de Trin. v. 11. Pet. de Deo ii. 6, 7.
[d] S. Anselm Monolog. c. 16. fin.

Nor is God less simply One, because He exists in Three Persons. In our material being it were contradictory that three were one. In us, goodness and wisdom and clemency and power are different: in God, they are inseparable. 'If then,' infers S. Augustine[e], 'you find in the One Person of the Father many attributes, yet findest not parts, how much more is Father, Son and Holy Ghost, both through the undivided Deity, One God, and through the property of Each, Three Persons, and through the Perfection of Each not parts of the One God.' 'God' says another[f], 'is One, because there is One Godhead, without beginning, simple, supersubstantial, indivisible, inseparable: the Same Unity and Trinity; the Same Whole Unity; the Same Whole Trinity; the Same Whole Unity according to the Substance, and the Same Whole Trinity according to the Persons. The Godhead is Father Son and Holy Ghost, and in Father Son and Holy Ghost; the Whole Godhead is the Same in the Whole Father, and the Father is Whole in It the Whole: the Same is Whole in the Whole Son and the Son is Whole in It the Whole; and the Same is Whole in the Whole Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is Whole in It the Whole. For not in part is the Godhead in the Father, nor is the Father in part God: nor is the Godhead in part in the Son, nor is the Son in part God; nor is the Godhead in part in the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Ghost in part God. For neither is the Godhead divisible, nor is

[e] c. Maximin. Arian. ii. 16.

[f] S. Maximus in Euthym. Panop. P. i. Tit. 2. p. 16 Lat: Greek in Pet. de Deo ii. 4. 3. n. 95. p. 99.

the Father or the Son or the Holy Ghost imperfect God.'

In this God, Father Son and Holy Ghost, Scripture tells us, "we live and move and are." God is not only in Heaven far above out of our sight. He is not *only* (what much modern science would have, if it condescends to speak of Him,) a First Cause of His creation, though of course He is the only Cause of things caused or created. He has not cast His creation into space, to uphold or develop itself by laws which He impressed upon it those all-but infinite ages back, Himself an unconcerned Spectator of His work; nor are we, His rational creatures, developments of those fixed laws, whom He beholds afar off. He still, Scripture tells us, "[g]upholdeth all things by the Word of His Power." "[h]In Him all things consist:" "in Him we too live and move and are." 'He wholly filleth all things, enfoldeth all things, surpasseth all things, sustaineth all things. Yet doth He not in one way support, in another surpass: in one way fill, in another enfold: but enfolding He filleth, and filling He enfoldeth; supporting, He surpasseth, and surpassing, He supporteth.' We are *in Him*, because we *are*, because we exist; and nothing can exist out of Him, because to Him there is no "without." He sees us wholly, being present with us wholly.

This we often confess to Him in the Psalm which He gave us. "[i]O Lord, Thou hast searched me out and known me, Thou hast known my down-sitting and my uprising: Thou hast known my

[g] Heb. i. 3. [h] Col. i. 17.
[i] Ps. cxxxix. 1—4, 10, 11.

thought long before. My path and my bed Thou hast sifted, and all my ways hast well-known. There is not a word on my tongue, lo, Thou, Lord, hast known it all. Behind and before Thou hast straitened me, and hast laid Thy hand upon me. If I say, surely the darkness will cover me, and light be night around me, even darkness shall not darken from Thee; and night shall give light as the day; as one are darkness and light." God is Omniscient, the Psalm says, being Omnipresent. He knoweth all, being present with all. The individuality of the knowledge of which the Psalmist speaks, comes from the individuality of His Being.

'[k] Since,' says a holy man to God, 'Thou presidest over all things, filling each, being wholly everywhere present, and caring for all things which Thou hast created; since Thou hatest nothing which Thou hast made, Thou so considerest all my ways, and day and night so keepest watch over me, diligently noting all my paths, as if, forgetting Thy whole creation of heaven and earth, Thou consideredst me alone and caredst not for others. For neither doth the light of Thy unchangeable vision increase, if Thou beholdest one only, nor is it minished if Thou seest countless diverse things. For as Thou considerest perfectly one whole altogether, so doth Thy whole sight behold perfectly and together each whole, though diverse. Whithersoever I go, Thou, O Lord, forsakest me not, unless I first forsake Thee. Wherever I may be, Thou departest not, since Thou art everywhere, so that, whithersoever I go, I shall find Thee, that I may not

[k] Soliloq. c. 14. in App. S. Aug. Opp. vi. 91.

perish without Thee, since without Thee I cannot be. I own that, whatever I do, I do before Thee, and whatever it is that I do, Thou seest better than I who do it. For whatever I work, Thou art ever by, inspecting ever all my thoughts, intentions, delights, doings.—And whether the root, from which leaves, fair without, spring, be sweet or bitter, Thou, the Judge within, knowest better than I. Thou, with the discriminating truth of Thy light, beholdest and markest not the intention only, but the inward hidden marrow of its root, so as to render unto each, not only according to his acts and intention, but according to the very inmost marrow of the root whence proceedeth the intention of the doer. Whereto I tend in my acts, what I think, wherein I delight, Thou seest, Thine ears hear, Thine eyes consider. Thou markest attentively and writest in Thy Book, whether it be good or bad; to render reward for the good, for the bad, punishment, when the books shall be opened and we shall be judged according to the things written in Thy book. When I consider Thee diligently, O Lord my God, terrible and strong, I am confounded with fear and great shame: for great is the necessity of living justly and rightly put upon us, since we do all before the eyes of an all-seeing Judge.'

We cannot picture to ourselves the Presence of God, because we have no faculties to imagine what a spirit is. We are conscious that we have souls. Let materialists say what they will, our consciousness is a witness to us. The blindness of the blind is no evidence against our sight. But in vain should we set ourselves to imagine the Presence of God,

who cannot imagine our own souls, which we know that we have. We cannot picture to ourselves spirit, so God speaks of Himself to us in Holy Scripture under images, taken from what we do know, ourselves, whom He, in some degree, made in His own likeness. But the facts we know. We know that God is close by us, closer to us than any of His creatures which He has made. He surrounds us and penetrates us: He is within us, without us. Glorious must be His Presence in Heaven, where 'Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy Holy Holy:' glorious must be His Presence in that space where our Divine Lord's Human Body is, shining with the Glory of the Godhead, which He had before the world was, so that although God is everywhere, yet in comparison to that glorious Presence in Heaven, He seemeth not to be on earth. Yet He is here, as much as in that place of ineffable glory. If we had eyes to behold Him, we should behold Him here in all that glory, which we should be capable or fit to behold, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; One God.

But then what great reverence is due to the Presence of God, the All-Holy, the All-Good, our continual Benefactor, Who daily loadeth us with His benefits, "in Whom and through Whom we live and move and are." Some deeds of shame men could not commit, if any but the accomplice of the sin were by. Not for fear of detection, not for fear of injury to their characters, or that they might be ill-reported of, but out of reverence to their fellow-men, out of remaining reverence for themselves, the image of God.

'[1] We shrink from the witness of a man, and commit what is unworthy in Thy sight, O our God. To look on great crimes is a wrong to man. We know that God is arbiter of all, and, with Him as our witness, we sin.' We say daily to our Lord 'We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge;' yet He Who shall then judge our cause is now the witness of our life.

But apart from that aweful issue of our good or ill, reverence, my sons, the Presence of God in you, around you, now. Remember, when tempted, *Who* is by. You could not utter some unseemly jest, if your sisters were by. You would reverence their purity. Reverence the holiness of God, Whom the pure in heart shall behold. He is nearer and loves you better than a sister could. You could not make a *profane* jest from His Word, if an elder whom you much reverenced were by. Reverence Him Whose Word it is, and make not a profane use of His Word in His very Presence. Remember, God is by. You would lay aside *that* bad book, you would cease *that* bad act, were one whom you regard to come into your room; read it not, do it not; for, God is by. You would, most of you, be shocked to do things unseemly in this Church which reminds us of His Presence. The whole world is His Temple, for everywhere He is by Essence, Presence and Power. Stand in awe of Him in public; He is around thee and seeth thee; stand in awe of Him in private; thou art in Him and He seeth thee. Dost thou go forth, He seeth thee; dost thou enter in, He awaiteth thee; art thou in the light, He seeth

[1] S. Ambr. Apol. David c. 10. n. 52.

thee, dost thou put out the light, He seeth thee; dost thou enter into thy chamber, behold Him: dost thou hold converse with thy soul, He is in thy heart and seeth thee. If thou wouldest sin, find a place where He is not present nor seeth thee, and do what thou willest. What thou wouldest not do, if thou sawest God in His Majesty, Father Son and Holy Ghost, by thee, *that* do not, for Thou art in Him. Thou livest not in the eyes only, but in the vast Bosom and the Heart of thy God.

SERMON XL.

THE ADORATION OF HEAVEN[a].

Rev. iv. 8.

"*They rest not day and night saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come.*"

What a marvel our poor race must be to all the blessed spirits in heaven, even to those who are most familiar with us, who have most to do with us, being sent by our God 'to succour and defend us on earth,' the blessed angels, the lowest order of those countless unseen hosts! What a marvel we must be to those who long that we should ever be joined on to that blessed company, with whom we, from time to time, unite in our Eucharistic thanksgivings, when 'with Angels and Archangels and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify God's glorious Name,' and sing their song, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts,' exulting that heaven and earth are full of His glory! What a marvel it must be to them, that having thus, for a moment, seen

[a] Preached in a College-Service, on Trinity Sunday, 1877.

heaven and our future home, open as it were, and shared their praises, we should sink down to all the commonplaces of this life, as if this were our abiding dwelling-place, our all! What a marvel and contempt sinners must be to the evil spirits, and ourselves too as far as we give way to sin and are enticed away from the service of our God, or if any become again their "[b]lawful captives;" half-beasts, if any are the prey of carnal sins; half-devils, if their sins be the sins of intellect; or both together, when men use their intellect in subserviency to their animal passions! What contempt must those proud spirits, who know in some measure what they wilfully forfeited when they cast themselves out of heaven, have for those, who become their slaves for such gew-gaws as they offer; not unlike the contempt which so-called civilised nations have for the poor savages, who would exchange their gold for toys, their pearls for glass-beads!

And yet we were created for such glorious dignity, that it is thought that Satan cast himself out of heaven, because he could not endure the vision of One, clothed with our poor nature, above himself, united with the ineffable Glory. And that glory reflects itself upon *us*, of whose nature our Incarnate Lord partook. And therefore Satan hates us with such undying, malignant hatred.

This then is the marvel to all those spirits, good or bad, who love us or who hate us, and both, for Jesus' sake, that we, for whom these glories are in store, for each of whom there is his own throne

[b] Is. xlix. 24.

vacant there, waiting empty, till we each be perfected by the grace of God; we, who are to be admitted to gaze with unveiled face on those unspeakable glories of our God; on Himself as He Is, think so little of it, are occupied with every trifle of each passing hour, and forget Him, our Maker, our Benefactor and our God.

And so, again, God, as it were, opens heaven to us, apart, for the time, from all those mysteries of His love, by which, through His grace, we hope to attain thither. What do we see? That central, All-surrounding, All-immersing Glory. God Himself, man in the flesh cannot see and live. We see only the Unapproachable Light, which, by its dazzling brilliancy hides Him Who, Scripture saith, "[c] dwelleth in light unapproachable." The beloved Apostle, he who, at the last Supper, lay on the bosom of the Lord Jesus and there drank the knowledge which he afterward poured forth, "[d] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," could tell nothing else than that it should be manifested hereafter. "[e] Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He Is." S. Paul, who was carried up to the third heaven, saw by an intellectual gaze what with the bodily eyes he did not see, for he knew that he saw, but he knew not whether he was in the body; he saw the Beatific Vision and the greatness of the Divine glory; yet to us, who

[c] 1 Tim. vi. 16. [d] S. John i. 1. [e] 1 S. John iii. 2.

are still in the flesh, he, being still in our mortal flesh, could tell nothing. He "[f] heard unspeakable words," but "which," he adds, "it is not lawful for a man to utter." But what see we there? Adoration. All is Adoration. Every created being worshippeth the Uncreated Creator of all. None excepted? None, save those wrecked intelligences, which worship not, yet cower in dismay before Him, Whom they hate.

All besides adore. All? Yes! Even the Deified Humanity of our Lord adores, and is the highest worshipper in Heaven. Even our Lord, the Man Christ Jesus, adores and thanks, that, not for any foreseen merits of His (for He had no existence except as in One Person with God) He lay in the Divine Mind before creation was, that God ever willed to create Him and place Him in that unspeakable glory at His Right-hand, that "[g] at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and in earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Yet this too, not for Himself, but "to the Glory of God the Father."

But since our Lord's Sacred Manhood adores, how much more all besides! We can picture those hosts of worshippers, who were once such as we; 'the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of Martyrs,' and all the saints, even to the last who has been perfected and admitted to the Beatific Vision of our God. The rest we cannot picture, save as Scripture has pictured them under our created sym-

[f] 2 Cor. xii. 4. [g] Phil. ii. 10, 11.

bols. Yet there they are. There, are the Seraphim, named from the glowing fiery love, which is their being: there the Cherubim with their gigantic intelligence. Yet there they adore. 'To Thee,' we repeat, 'Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Sabaoth.' And so all those orders of the heavenly beings, of which S. Paul speaks, all adore there. "[h] For by the Son," he says, "were all things created, in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him:" and they fulfil the end of their being by serving and adoring Him, by Whom and *for* Whom they were created.

Such is the picture of heaven in Holy Scripture. But why do they adore God, and in what does the Adoration consist? They adore Him surely, because they see Him and know Him; because He is their God; because He is All which Is; and they, nothing but what He has given them to be. They adore Him, because He Alone Is. That word "Is" containeth all. Whither should they turn, but to Him Who Is. To each other? But all which they are, is from Him, a little ray from His boundless light; a derived life from Him, the Fountain of life; good, each according to his fulness, from Him, the Fountain of good. Once, they had their choice. The evil spirits saw and, preferring themselves and their own independence, fell. The blessed inhabitants of heaven stood, and now are fixed entranced by that Beatific Vision, which holds them by a lov-

[h] Col. i. 16.

ing constraint, or a constraint which is love. They behold Him Who is Almighty Will, All-loving Power, Everlasting Light, Unchangeable Reason, Supreme Bliss, creating minds to partake of Him, quickening them to feel Him, moving them to desire Him, enlarging them to receive Him. He has given Himself to them to behold, as He Is. Changing in place, ministering, as our Lord has told us, to each one of His little ones, they are never severed from the contemplation of God. "'[i]They do always," He says, "behold the Face of My Father which is in Heaven." 'They ever behold Him present to them, ever blessed by the presence of Deific Truth. They ever gaze on It, above them in the Divine Essence: before them, present to them by contemplation; within them, being united by love, hanging upon it for its incomprehensible excellence, borne out of themselves by the sweetness of fruition.' There they behold God Who is Love: and God and the love of God are one; for all which is in God, is God. There they behold God the Father ever giving Himself to the Son in that Divine ineffable continual consubstantial Generation, and the Father and the Son in the Procession of the Holy Spirit Who is the Love of the Father and the Son, One with the Father and the Son, in substance, essence, goodness, power, wisdom, eternity, majesty; but not in Person. For although Father Son and Holy Spirit are One God, Indivisible, Unconfused, Infinite, yet are They not One Person; since there is One Person of the Father, Another of the Son, Another of the Holy

[i] S. Matt. xviii. 10.

Ghost, yet One not earlier nor later in time than Another, none mightier or less mighty, but all Co-equal; All Three Persons One Very God, Almighty, Supreme, Perfect; Father Son and Holy Ghost; concordant in will, alike in Omnipotence clemency power and charity. For what the Father worketh that the Son worketh and the Holy Spirit; what the Son knoweth, the Father knoweth and the Holy Spirit; what the Holy Ghost willeth, that, in like way, the Father willeth and the Son. This is the Blessed Trinity, Father Son and Holy Ghost; not three Gods, but One God, Whom all the angels, thrones, principalities, dominions, and powers adore. Yea and all the predestinated, who are written in the book of life, redeemed and glorified, praise bless and give thanks; crying with one harmonious voice, Holy, Holy, Holy; from Whom, in Whom, by Whom, all things were made, visible and invisible, spiritual and corporeal, temporal and eternal, and without Whom nothing was made.

By them and for them we, then, one by one were made; we were, one by one, the objects of God's Infinite love: one by one, we were created for that love, yea, for God Himself, Who is Love; and since we were made for God, nothing less than God, nothing out of God, could content our souls. For that beatific Vision we were each one of us made. For each one of us was that place made around the eternal Throne which remains vacant for each of us, until we, by the grace of God, be purified and perfected for it, or (God forbid) forfeit it. For this, we were each of us created by His Almighty power;

for this we were brought out of nothingness; for this, we were redeemed by the Blood of Christ; for this, regenerated by God's Holy Spirit; for this, sanctified by His Indwelling; for this, fed continually with the Body and Blood of Christ; for this, called, re-called, re-re-called, it matters not out of what depth of misery or defilement, out of what slavery to things, which men themselves loathe when they are over. The piece of silver is sought out of the mire, that it may be cleansed, brightened, reflect the brightness of heaven; that the image, which was encrusted with sin, may shine out with that pure lustre, the light of God, the Spirit of God, within us.

And we, who are stamped anew with the image of God, who are redeemed by the Blood of Christ, who are betrothed by faith, who have the dowry of the Spirit, who are (if we would have it) imbued with grace, who are ranked with the angels, whose home is in heaven, who are fellow-citizens with the saints and are of the family of God; we whose poor body is to be conformed to *His*, Who sitteth at the Right Hand of God; His, Who is adored by angels; His, in attendance upon Whom stand the incorporeal Powers; His, Who is above all principality and power and might—what do we? Is there none to give glory to God, save some stranger, some one who is less inured to the mercies of our God, some one whose hunger and thirst is less palled, by being always filled? How are we fulfilling the end of our being, if we do not habitually refer ourselves and all which we have and are, to Him, from Whom we

have all, the Good of all goods; the Good from Whom is all good; the Good, without Whom nothing is good; the Good, which, without all else, is Good. His we are, because He made us in His Image for Himself, when as yet we were not; His we are, because He purchased our salvation by the Precious Blood of Jesus, One God with Him, one Flesh with us, when we were lost; His we are, because, when we had no power to refuse by an opposed will, He made us His own children, members of Christ, inheritors of that unspeakable glory. Would we wrest ourselves out of His loving Hands,

> Hands that made and fashioned us,
> And, when marr'd, remoulded thus,

as, for us, they were fastened by those sharp nails to the Cross? Would we wrest ourselves thence, and give ourselves into the iron, scorching, withering grasp of Satan?

O that we could learn that one thing, to long to belong to God! Our whole being might be one Adoration, one self-oblation, one thanksgiving. Work for God might be Adoration. In its true deep sense, "laborare est orare." To labour, having God for our end, God for our Teacher, God for our Inspirer, the half-unconscious End of our end, even as we see by aid of the light which we do not, cannot gaze upon; Him, for Whom we do all that we do; Him, Whose glory we thirst to promote; Him, Whom Alone in all we would seek; Him, Whom in purity, simplicity and sincerity, we love. How is it the soul of all labours, the refreshment of all weariness, the consolation of all failures, that it is

for God! Nay there can be no failure. Whether we succeed or no, God's glorious Will rides on triumphantly. There can be no failure; for each deed done by the grace of God, though it be but the cup of cold water, is stored up there. God might have demanded of us all which He gave us. His it is, because we have it from Him. He must uphold us, and it in us; else we should sink back into the nothingness, out of which He drew us. But He vouchsafes to ask of our own free-will to give Him what is His own. What joy to labour for one whom we love! What joy to have 'the daily round, the common task,' transmuted into a sacrifice, acceptable to Him. Yet to make it acceptable to Him, fire from Himself must temper it. The ground of the lukewarmness of so many of our prayers probably is, that we think to pray through the habitual grace which God gives us, and ask not of Him evermore to kindle anew the fire of His love in us. We ask it of Him, once for all at the beginning of our prayers; and this is something. We own that without Him we cannot pray. This is one gift the more, that He has made us such, that we can not only freely give Him of His own, but through *Him* we can give it. We follow Him, but He draws us, that we may follow Him; we follow Him, because He upholds us; we long for Him, but those unutterable longings, which are a continual prayer, are from Him. '[k] God could give to men no greater gift, than to make His Word, through Whom He created all things, their Head, and join them to Him

[k] S. Aug. in Ps. lxxxv. [lxxxvi. Oxf. Tr.] init.

as His members; that He should be One God with the Father, one Man with us, and when we speak to God in prayer, we separate not the Son from Him; and when the body of the Son prayeth, He separateth not His body from Him; so that there is one Saviour of His body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who both prayeth for us and prayeth in us and is prayed by us. He prayeth for us, as our High Priest: He prayeth in us, as our Head: He is prayed by us, as our God.'

The Church puts the confession into our mouths, 'O Lord, open Thou our lips, and our mouth shall shew forth Thy praise.' Prayer and praise will become other to us, as we learn to ask Him repeatedly to help us in it, and then utter the next prayer or praise with all our might.

So shall we learn, day by day, the first notes of that endless song, which will be the joy of our eternity. "[l] Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they shall be always praising Thee." This will be our business for ever, an unfailing Halleluia. Fear not, that there will be a monotony in that endless praise. Heaven, without love, were an intolerable monotony. There is no monotony in love. "[m] We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Being like Him, how shall we fail? Whither should we turn away? Fear not, the praise of God, the love of God shall not satiate. If thou wouldest cease to love, thou mightest cease to praise; but if that love shall be unceasing, because that beauty can never cloy, fear not, lest thou

[l] Ps. lxxxiv. 4. [m] 1 S. John iii. 2.

shouldest not be able ever to praise Him, Whom thou shalt ever love.

"[n] Father of Jesus, love's reward,
What rapture will it be,
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie,
And gaze, and gaze on Thee."

"[o] O may the Father, Son, and Spirit be,
Our help in time of need, our joy eternally."

But in this too, this day and ever, keep in mind, *Who* must be Himself the Way to Himself the Life. 'Be Jesus,' said one[p] who knew well what Jesus 'tis to love, 'Be Jesus ever in thy heart, and the image of the Crucified never depart from thy mind. Be this to thee meat and drink, sweetness and consolation, longing and contemplation: thy life and death; so will it also be thy Resurrection.'

To which He of His mercy bring us all, Who for us lived and died and rose again, and now at the Right Hand of God intercedeth for each one of us.

[n] Hymns Ancient and Modern, No. 169.
[o] Ib. No. 159. [p] S. Bernard.

Thanks be to God
for His unspeakable gift.

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